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THE COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY

OF

PALESTINE AND THE SINAITIC PENINSULA.

THE COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY

OF

PALESTINE

AND THE

SINAITIC PENINSULA.

BY CARL RITTER.

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Translated and Adapted to the Use of Biblical Students

BY

WILLIAM L. GAGE.

VOL. I.

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TO HER WHO HAS BORNE

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THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

IN AFFECTIONATE RECOGNITION

OF SERVICES WHICH THE READER WOULD OTHERWISE NEVER KNOW,

AND COULD THEREFORE NEVER APPRECIATE.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

In the year 1864 the publishers of these volumes did me the honour to ask me to undertake a condensed translation of Professor Ritter's volumes on the Holy Land. Having been one of the many thousand pupils of the great geographer, and sharing with all who ever heard or knew him the enthusiasm with which both his character and his attainments were regarded, such a proposition could not fail to be grateful; and all the more so, that the state of my health favoured the prosecution of a work of this nature, and the temporary relinquishment of professional labours. The work was to be limited to four volumes, of the size now before the reader; and the responsibility of selection, rejection, and condensation of matter, was to rest with myself as editor. Such a charge could not be lightly assumed; nor can it now be dismissed without a preliminary word to the reader.

The volumes of Ritter's *Erdkunde von Asien*, which relate to what may be called in the largest sense—Holy Land, *i.e.* those which describe the Sinai Peninsula, Palestine, and Syria, would make about fourteen volumes of the size now in the reader's hand. A distinguishing feature of the work—some would say *the* distinguishing feature—is, that it contains, in a compact and digested form, the entire literature of the subject down to the date of publication, about fifteen years ago. Ritter's perfect command of the Greek and Latin languages, and of the modern tongues of Europe, together with his intimate relations with the most distinguished orientalists of his time, gave him incomparable advantages in using all existing materials; and his immense industry and fine method were his constant auxiliaries in the task. His work is therefore one which would be pronounced, at the outset, almost impossible to

condense, and indispensable, in its full form, to all whose tastes or pursuits make it necessary to command the entire literature of the subject. The German edition must still supply the wants of such students; and as the work is a classic, it can be found in most large libraries.

It is a little remarkable, however, that in almost all the references to Ritter in English works on the Holy Land, his fulness alone should be referred to, to the exclusion of other sterling qualities. All his pupils know, that his power of brilliant yet correct generalization, and of methodical statement, was more strictly the ground on which he was strongest, than in the patient accumulation of facts; and no one can read his little volume of *University Lectures on Comparative Geography*, published last year, without feeling that, in the power of condensation, and of taking a broad and comprehensive survey of a wide field, he has had no superior. It seemed to me, therefore, as if a work of three or four volumes might be made from the voluminous *Erdkunde;* and in visiting Germany, to take counsel of the leading geographers there, I found but one opinion expressed respecting not only the expediency of doing so, but the necessity of condensing, if the result were to be at all successful. Authority should not have more than its just weight; still it may interest the reader to know, that every distinguished geographer of Germany was consulted respecting this point, and many men eminent in other departments of science, whose close personal relations to Ritter would enable them to decide how far an editor might venture to go in dealing with his great work.

It being decided that it was possible to abridge the original, the question arose, on what principle should the abridgment be effected? I need not detain the reader with a rehearsal of the various methods which suggested themselves, but will pass at once to the one selected. In view of the twofold fact, that the Holy Land owes by far the greater share of its interest to what is biblical in its history and its geography, and that the volumes issued by the English publishers of this work find their way into the hands of those whose studies are largely theological, I was led to believe, that the most feasible method of condensing, was to retain almost, or quite, intact whatever illustrates the Bible, and just so much of what remained as would keep the

outlines of the subject unbroken, and allow the reader to see the masterly method of the original work. It must be borne in mind, that in spite of Ritter's paramount interest in all that illustrates the Bible, this work is a part of his colossal *Geography of Asia*, and that it did not enter into his plan to make the volumes on Syria biblical, any more than it did those on Arabia or Asia Minor. The treatise is universal in its scope: it is by no means limited to the evolution of Judaism and Christianity. Ritter, though one of the most truly Christian men of his time, aimed to make the *Erdkunde* a scientific work, and not a commentary on the Bible. It has been my task to take out from it, in such a way as to do as little violence as possible to what remains, that portion which shall most interest biblical students, and best illustrate the sacred Scriptures.

Some portions have not been changed at all. The masterly introduction of the second volume remains as it came from Ritter's hand; and so, too, does the careful enumeration of authorities, excepting so far as it is supplemented by the list of works (pp. 86–103) on Palestine which have appeared since Ritter wrote. The exhaustive monographs on Manna, Philistia, the Canaanite Tribes, Jerusalem, and the situation of Ophir, are also unchanged, excepting in the case of one omission, indicated by a footnote. The discursions on Hebron, Tabor, the Sea of Galilee, the Sinai and Serbal group, the line of march supposed to be taken by the Israelites through the Peninsula, and the chief biblical sites in Palestine proper, have not been materially abridged: indeed, it is believed that most readers will think that too much minute detail has been retained, and that the work bears in its diffuseness too distinct traces, even yet, of its German origin.

Having adopted the plan of condensation indicated above, and having rejected the more obvious one of uniform compression, the task simplified itself at once. The district in which the student of the Bible is mainly interested is that lying between Dan and Beersheba—Palestine proper. With this may be coupled the Sinai Peninsula, the scene where Hebrew nationality first took on form, and where a wandering horde was subjected to a permanent polity. It is plain that Egypt, the territory east of the Jordan, and even the great cities of the north, are Bible lands merely in a secondary sense,

and that the interest in them is only to be recognised when that in the home of the chosen people is in good measure satisfied. This fact seemed to indicate the manner in which the first step should be taken in my work, namely, that only those volumes should be touched which relate to Palestine proper and the Sinai Peninsula. Printed in full, these would comprise about eight volumes of the present size; and the task of condensation was made comparatively a simple one. The first volume of this edition contains about a third of the one which Ritter devotes to the Peninsula; the other three contain more than one-half of the two volumes in the original, which relate to the district between Dan and Beersheba, or in geographical language, between the Desert and Lebanon.

Although many scores of books have been written on the Holy Land since Ritter closed his labours, by far the greater number (excepting those relating distinctively to Jerusalem) have not been of great value in a scientific point of view. Tobler, Sepp, Stanley, Porter, and Tristram are too well known to the reader to require specification; but Ritter laid down his pen recently enough to use the researches of Lynch, Thomson, Porter, and Tobler in no slight measure, though without commanding the collected works of those patient investigators. Notwithstanding the closeness of my limits, I have not hesitated to incorporate here and there an illustrative note from recent travellers, though of course the main care has been to deal justly by Ritter, rather than to reprint what lies within the reach of all Palestine students. Mr Tristram's book came to hand too late to be of that service which its great merits would have assured. The Jerusalem literature has acquired such formidable proportions, that I preferred, on the whole, to allow Ritter's two hundred careful, and in a measure exhaustive, pages to remain as they came from his pen. In its way, his monograph has long been considered an authority, and to amend it in its details would have been an invidious task. Its leading positions remain as when they were first established.

Ritter, not being an Arabic scholar, did not attempt to lay down a system of orthography for proper names. In using his sources, his course was usually to adopt the spelling of the traveller whose work he had in hand. This gives rise to a very great variety in the forms of names,—a variety which is not a

little perplexing to the reader of his works. The system introduced by Robinson and Eli Smith was well known to Ritter: it was even commended by him, but not employed. That being the case, I have not felt myself justified in going beyond the bounds which he set in this matter. But as Robinson and Smith's system is becoming so largely and generally adopted, it may not be out of place to remark, that before his death the former assented to the justness of a criticism of Professor Hüpfeld on his uniform employment of *ŭ* where *a* would just as truly render the sound, and give the word a look much more familiar to the English eye. Instances will occur in such words as Kŭrmul, Sebŭstiyeh, Tŭbariyeh, and the like. There is every reason to think, that had the life of the great American explorer been spared longer, he would, by the substition of *a* for *ŭ*, have given his pages an aspect far more agreeable to the eye of Europeans and his own countrymen than they have at present.

The maps which accompany Ritter's work are utterly unworthy of being associated with his great name. They are therefore not reproduced in this edition. Nor will the book suffer by their omission; for the excellent maps which accompany the works of Robinson, Tristram, and Stanley, are within the reach of most students. The best *new* map of Palestine is the last edition of Van der Velde, issued in Gotha. Mr Reimer of Berlin intends to publish, as soon as possible, a new edition of Kiepert's *Wall Map of Palestine*, in both English and German orthography, and embracing the results of the most recent discoveries. This, in point of accuracy and scientific worth, will not be inferior to any other of Professor Kiepert's admirable productions. The closer students of biblical geography should not fail to use two maps by Menke, issued by Perthes of Gotha, and to be had separately. The publication of Menke's *Biblical Atlas* in full, within a year, and that of Mr Grove in a future not distant it is hoped, will put the public in command of works of the utmost faithfulness and value. It is understood that the work last named will embody the numerous and important materials acquired by Captain Wilson and Lieutenant Anderson, of the Royal Engineers, in their recent expedition for the Palestine Exploration Fund. This list should not be closed without mention of the fact that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have

in an advanced state of preparation an Atlas of Biblical Geography, which in beauty and accuracy will be an honour to the English press. It is edited by Rev. S. Clark, and will be enriched with an index of all the names in the Bible and Apocrypha, from the indefatigable pen of Mr Grove.

I cannot close this Preface without expressing my grateful acknowledgments for more than official courtesy to the librarians of the Royal Libraries of Berlin and Dresden, the Ducal Library of Saxe Gotha, the City Library of Frankfort, and the University Libraries of Heidelberg, Bonn, and Halle. It would be impossible to recount the names of the gentlemen who have given me unrestrained access to their private collections, and the benefit of their counsel. Yet it would be wrong to pass the name of the lamented Barth without a word. He, who had done so much for England, entered with the utmost warmth into the plan of giving the works of his great teacher to the English nation, and his sudden death robbed me at once of a friend and a helper.

It is impossible for the reader to find in this, or indeed in any of the published writings of Ritter, the secret of that fascination which he exerted over all who had any relations with him. In some respects his was one of the most beautiful and perfect characters of our time; and I do not wonder that even a polished and courtly, but thoroughly worldly, man like Tieck should write, after travelling for some hours with him in the railway train, that he had had such converse with Ritter as is granted but seldom this side heaven. That combination of dignity (almost majesty, in fact) with sweetness and childlikeness, of earnestness with playfulness, that unclouded sunniness, that approachableness, that modesty, that unworldliness, that clear, luminous eye, that steady, calm, kindly voice, who can forget? To his non-German admirers, one of his superadded charms was, that, although walking in the highest fields of science, there was no glory that he prized higher than that of Christ, and no honour that he accounted dearer than the Christian name. It is impossible to estimate the value of his life, even in this regard, in a country like Germany, where so large a portion of the men of science are at issue with Christianity.

W. L. GAGE.

BERLIN, *Jan.* 15, 1866.

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THE SINAI PENINSULA.

*** The Publishers will arrange to supply such of the purchasers of this work as may desire it, with Kiepert's *Wall Map of Palestine*, referred to in the Editor's Preface, at a low rate, so soon as published. They will be glad to receive orders for it, or for the new edition of Menke's *Biblical Atlas*, also to be shortly published.

THE SINAI PENINSULA.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

SEC. 1. THE CHRISTO-BYZANTIAN, ARABIAN, AND GRÆCO-ROMAN EPOCHS.

NOT insignificant connecting link between the two great continents of Asia and Africa, is the country which binds Arabia and Egypt closely together, and which has for its own boundaries the Gulf of Ælа or Akaba on the east, that of Suez on the west, and that of Gaza on the north. This tract, which is impassably separated on the N.E. by the Dead Sea from the great interior regions of Arabia and Syria-beyond-Jordan, is best known at the present time by the term Arabia Petræa, although that designation is never heard from the lips of the natives of the country. The southern portion of the whole district, a triangle of land, having the two gulfs of the Red Sea for two of its sides, and embracing an extent of territory nearly equal to that of Sicily, would, in a strict use of language, be called the Peninsula of Sinai, for its mountain region forms the central nucleus of the whole district; and in its physical independence of all the neighbouring districts, it has created for itself a history growing out of, and not intelligible except in connection with, its own geographical characteristics. The sea and the desert have shut it up within itself, and given it the consecration which has made it the sacred vestibule of the history of our Christian faith.

Although, since the times of the Byzantine and Roman domination, this country has borne the name Arabia Petræa, and

although it is now looked upon as an integral part of Arabia, yet in ancient times it was not so. The earliest Arabian geographers expressly excluded it from their own domain. Isstachri,[1] in his account of the boundaries of Arabia, is perfectly explicit in rejecting this region, and in assigning the reason why his countrymen put no value upon it: namely, because its want of water and of pasturage made it absolutely worthless. In fact, the most ancient Arabian geographers gave the district no name whatever.

This forswearing on the part of Isstachri of any claim to the country on the side of the Arabians, shows very clearly, that the mutual kinship and alliance asserted in the Koran and elsewhere to exist between the "sons of Joktan," the descendants of Ishmael, the Edomites, and the house of Abraham, were not recognised as descending to the Arab tribes of the ninth and tenth centuries, when Isstachri lived, else his language would have been a real, though unconscious, claim that Arabia Petræa was the home of his nation's ancestors.

It was only at a comparatively recent period that Arabians, or Arabs, as they are called when in a wild and uncivilised state, became first the partial population of the country, and then its lords and only regular inhabitants. Before Mohammed's hordes had advanced so far as to the Gulf of Ælа, Byzantine Christians, mainly Greeks, had peopled the land. Before these the Nabathæans had possessed it; and before them the Idumæans (*i.e.* sons of Edom), Midianites and Amalekites, Israelites, Egyptians, and Phœnicians. The ancient names, Nabatæa or Idumæa, would be far more appropriately given to the country than the name Arabia, which has come into general use since the times of Pliny and Ptolemy. The name Arabia Petræa, too, is the result of an accident. It arose from a hasty application of the name of that ancient Petra, in the heart of Edom, to the whole country; and Rocky Arabia became the general appellation of a land whose most important city was hewn out of a single rock. At a later day that city itself was forgotten, and the only trace of it which remained was that which was found in the name of the country in which it lay.

The fact to which Isstachri alludes is confirmed by the fact

[1] Isstachri, *Das Buch der Länder*, Hamburg 1848, pp. 31, 32, 33; also p. 5, and Not. 19, p. 141.

that Mohammed made no attempt to enter the Sinai Peninsula. It remained under the power of the Byzantine rulers till A.D. 630, when it was for the first time subjected to Moslem extortion. In the year 527, Justinian, the Greek emperor, erected the great convent at Mount Sinai; and at that time the country was filled with a population of monks and hermits: no Arabians had entered it as yet.

And even in the accounts which have come down to us of attacks suffered by the Christian population of the Peninsula in that early epoch, the assailing parties are never alluded to as Arabians, but as Saracens, meaning people from Mesopotamia, Syria, the Euphrates,—side branches of the Nabathæans; and all these conflicts bear evidence of coming, not from people living in the land, but from those whose homes were beyond the border.

We have left to us but few records of that age; but the few which we have are invaluable, covering, as they do, the time between the introduction of Christianity in the third century and the Moslem subjugation of the land in the seventh. The present geographical condition of the Peninsula is largely interpreted by those scanty records: it is to them that the places which are consecrated by hallowed legends owe their sanctity; and the stamp which they have given is what has perpetuated there the remembrances of the great events of the Mosaic time.

There does not remain to us a single book dating from that remote period, that gave to the Peninsula all its interest in the eyes of men, which must not be judged as to authenticity by its agreement in matters of name, number, and general circumstance, with the Mosaic books; and those books themselves must be interpreted in accordance with their agreement with the region where they were written,—a region so peculiar, so marked in its special features, so wholly unique, that it must be regarded as proof given by God, and far better than any which man could assign, of the truth contained in the Record of the greatest events which have transpired in the history of our race.

And yet, with all the remarkable harmony which exists between the place where God did such wonderful things, and the manner in which He displayed His power, it is not to be denied that in many minor details the light which we enjoy

is deficient, and we can only wish that it were increased. Yet it cannot be wondered at, that men who wrote more than fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, did not think that it was any part of their mission to enter into topographical details regarding the place where Jehovah displayed His power. They felt that theirs was the simple task of recording His deeds. But the result was, that there remains to us no living bond of connection, no direct and unmistakeable tradition, running back from our days to the most ancient times; and after the death of Moses there was a full thousand years when Sinai and its localities seem to have been completely forgotten by the children of Israel.

Robinson has called attention[1] to the remarkable fact, that after the departure of the Israelites from Sinai, there is not in the Bible nor elsewhere an allusion to more than one single pilgrimage made by a Jew to the scenes which were so momentous and so solemn in the history of his nation. Elijah, fleeing from Jezebel, is the only one of his race who seems to have gone back to visit the scenes where the law was given on Horeb (1 Kings xix. 2, 13). And all that we learn regarding the "wilderness," between the time of the journey of the Hebrews through it and the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, is only gleaned from the allusions to Ezion-geber and Elath, in connection with the voyages to Ophir (1 Kings ix. 26), and from brief glimpses of the glory of Petra, and of the colonies established by the Phœnicians and Nabathæans in the borders of the land.

I. THE CHRISTO-BYZANTIAN EPOCH PRIOR TO THE MOSLEM SUBJUGATION OF THE LAND IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY,

GATHERED FROM THE WRITINGS OF DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, ABBOT SILVANUS, AMMONIUS, NILUS, PROCOPIUS, EUTYCHIUS, COSMOS INDICOPLEUSTES, AND ANTONINUS MARTYR.

It will be more consonant with my purpose to discuss what relates to the ancient Phœnician and Egyptian colonies in the Sinai Peninsula, when in the course of this volume I shall have come to the consideration of the monuments which they have left us. Passing over these traces of a history which runs

[1] *Bib. Researches*, second English edition, vol. i. 121.

back to the time of Moses, even if it be not still more ancient, I will devote a few pages to the discussion of those scanty and brief fragments which have come to us, relating to the condition and population of this country prior to the rise of the great Chalifates of Asia, and the consequent subjugation of the Peninsula by the Moslem power. I cannot too warmly express the obligations which I owe to my loved and honoured friend Dr Robinson for the admirable manner in which, in his classic work, the *Biblical Researches*, he has opened the subject, and indeed made it possible to continue what he has so ably begun. Yet it is but fair to state that he has not exhausted the whole field; and I shall hope to cite some facts which shall be new even to the reader of Dr Robinson's work.

In neither Christian nor pagan writers of the very earliest period, after the coming of the Saviour, are there any distinct references to Mount Sinai and the adjacent region. Dionysius of Alexandria, writing about A.D. 250, speaks of the holy mountain as a place of refuge for the Egyptian Christians when they were attacked by Saracens, who often took them and held them as slaves. The legend of St Catherine the martyr, whose remains are said to have been borne through the air from Alexandria to the lofty peak of the Sinai group, the one now bearing her name, assigns that event to the year 307; and whatever stress may be laid on the legend, there is doubtless one true inference to be drawn from it, namely, that at that early date the country was in the possession, not of pagans, but of those who were friendly to the Christian faith. It is true there is no express mention of the settlement of the land by adherents of our religion, except the allusions found in the record of one Abbot Silvanus, who about the year 365 withdrew into the country around Mount Sinai, and spent several years there, laying out gardens and caring for them, establishing monasteries but not living in them, but dwelling with his friend Zacharias apart, and at a later period withdrawing farther north to the neighbourhood of Gerar, in the land of the ancient Philistines.

Robinson alludes[1] to a little tract written by Ammonius, an

[1] *Bib. Researches*, vol. i. p. 122. Ritter quotes Robinson in full; but as the *Bib. Researches* are at the command of all who will consult these pages, I only allude to them.—ED.

Egyptian monk, recounting his visit to Mount Sinai, and the attack made on a company of Christian anchorites living there by a party of Saracens, in the course of which forty monks were slain. In memory of them, Robinson conjectures that the ruined convent of el-Arbain, or the Forty, at the western base of Sinai, received its name.

Another attack, according to Ammonius, was made at the same time at Raithu, the modern Tor.

Nilus, who resided for a long time at Sinai, has given us an account of another equally sad incursion of Saracens, whose course was marked by slaughter and the enslaving of their captives.

From these accounts it is clear, that at the end of the fourth century there remained almost no Christian settlement in the Peninsula which had not been ravaged by these savage enemies, whose home lay between Petra and the Dead Sea, where they could sell the booty which they gained on their plundering expeditions. Nor was it possible to make an effective resistance, for the Christian establishments were so far apart that they could not succour each other. Faran must have been their central point; for in the earliest accounts we have allusions to a council or senate there, which debated earnestly what measures should be employed for protection against the savage assailants.

Robinson[1] cites the testimony afforded by a letter from the Emperor Marcian to the bishop Macerius and monks in Mount Sinai, "where are situated monasteries beloved of God and worthy of all honour." This was in the middle of the fifth century.

He also quotes in full the tradition of the present Convent of St Catherine, and the account given by Eutychius, relating to the erection in 527 of the present massive structure, which up to the present day accomplishes the object which it was intended to subserve at the very first, namely, the protection of its Christian inmates from the violence of savage and unbelieving foes. There is some doubt resting over the question in exactly what year the convent was built, for the year assigned by the tradition of the place was that in which Justinian ascended the throne; but there is no doubt at all that during

[1] *Bib. Researches*, i. 124.

his reign that powerful fortress was built, and that all that outlay of money was made which resulted in the laying out of the many gardens, the paving of the many roads, the erection of the many other edifices, whose ruined splendour is all that is left to tell us how valuable a possession this Sinai region was held to be. And this is indicated by some slight records which have been preserved to us from those times.

We find[1] the signatures, dated at Ephesus A.D. 400, of the bishops of Elusa and Phœno, two places in Arabia Petræa, one of which, Phœno, lying between Petra and Zoar, has not been as yet identified; while the other, Elusa, has been found by Robinson to be the modern el-Khulaseh. In the year 403, at the Council of Chalcedon, not only the bishops above named recorded their signatures, but also Beryllus bishop of Ælа, Musonius of Zoar, Johannes of a certain unknown Chrysopolis, and Johannes and Eusthathius as the first Christian priests among the Saracens. After the council just named, the power of the metropolitan of Bostra, a see in the Hauran, east of the Jordan, was much diminished in consequence of Maximus, patriarch of Antioch, taking part with the patriarch of Jerusalem against him. This step led to several of the churches in Arabia Petræa being taken from the see of Bostra, and being conjoined with the patriarchate of Jerusalem,[2] the new district taking the name of Palæstina Tertia. This diocese soon gained in strength, and began to exert an influence on the nomadic tribes of the Peninsula. Petra became the seat of an archbishopric, and Ælа, Pharan, Sinai, Phœno, became prosperous bishoprics, lasting till the time of their sudden extinction at the end of the seventh century, when the Moslem power was in the ascendant.

Robinson refers briefly to the narrative of Cosmas Indicopleustes,[3] an Egyptian, who united the characters of monk and merchant, and who made a pilgrimage to Sinai about the year 540. I will cite him more fully, however, because his narra-

[1] C. Ritter, *zur Gesch. des petræischen Arabiens*, 1824, pp. 221–223.

[2] Assemani *Bibl. Orient.* T. iii. P. ii. fol. 594; cf. Allatius, *de consensu utriusque ecclesiæ*, lib. i. c. 12, in C. Ritter's work just referred to, *zur Gesch. d. petræischen Arabiens.*

[3] Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christ. Topogr. sive Christianorum de mundo opinio*, in *Bern. de Montfaucon, Collectio nova Patrum, etc.*, Paris 1706, T. ii. lib. iii. fol. 161; lib. v. fol. 193, 195, 205.

tive is peculiarly interesting as that of the first one who has tried to follow in the very footsteps of the children of Israel. His observations on the inscriptions of the Peninsula are of value.

Cosmas indicates the place where he supposed that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea as Klysma; he then points out what he supposes to be the wilderness of Shur, then Marah, and then Elim, which in his time was called Raithu (not the same Raithu which was at Tor, many miles to the south). From Elim, where he counted twelve springs, he turned away from the sea, which up to that point had been on his right, and turned inland, passing through the wilderness towards the Sinai mountain range, and noting the country where manna first fell. He rested in Rephidim (Num. xxxiii. 14), which he identifies with Pharan, where Moses, in the lack of water, struck the rock, and where "with his staff in his hand he ascended Mount Choreb in Sinai, which is at a distance of six millia from Pharan." There, too, he overcame Amalek, and met his father-in-law Jethro.

Cosmas closes the account of his journey by alluding to a feature of the scenery which greatly impressed him, and convinced him of the unquestionable authenticity of the sacred narrative. This was the great number of inscriptions which he found along the way, and which he was the first to allude to. His opinion is, that the Israelites learned the art of writing from the tables of the law, and that in their young enthusiasm they wrote much more than a people more familiar with the art would have done. This, Cosmas thinks, accounts for the great number of the inscriptions which he saw, all the places where they would naturally rest being covered with them. Some Jews, who travelled with him, assured him that their ancestors recorded the names of the tribes, the dates of their journey, and many such items as travellers are in the habit of recording. This narrative is worth thus much at least to us, that it indicates that prior to the Moslem invasion of the country those inscriptions were there, and were just as inscrutable as they remain to us to-day. And the topographical value of Cosmas lies in his statement that, at the time of his visit, Horeb, which he identifies with Sinai, was considered to be a mountain only six millia from Pharan (the present Wadi

Feiran). This would imply that the present Serbal, the only mountain which he could refer to as so near, was then considered to be the sacred mountain where the law was given: a view which has been renewed within our own day by Burckhardt and Lepsius. Yet it cannot fail to be noticed, that such an opinion militates directly against the statements made by Nilus, Procopius, and Eutychius, regarding the building of Justinian's convent, and the sacredness, even then, of the place chosen for the site.

About the year 600, Antoninus Martyr[1] of Placentia made a pilgrimage through the Peninsula, entering at the northern side, visiting the scenes of the greatest biblical interest, and leaving the country at the same point where the Israelites entered it. The account of his journey has been accused by some of untrustworthiness, but I find in it the strongest marks that it was not the forgery which some have asserted it to be. Antoninus travelled in eight days from the northern frontier to Sinai, passing Elusa on the way. His account of Sinai, its newly erected convent, the reputed cave where Elijah found shelter, the chapel at the summit, in a word, all the features of the place, correspond exactly with the older accounts of Procopius and Eutychius, and with the researches of the most recent travellers. Yet, in comparing his account with that of Cosmas, there is a strong want of accord. They wrote at nearly the same time; but to one of them Sinai was the sacred mountain, to the other Serbal was the scene of the law-giving. Is it possible that at that early day Constantinople and Alexandria were at variance regarding the sacred site, and that theologians of the different schools took the view of their own, and ignored that of the other; and that the Byzantine theory, backed by all the resources of the emperor, became the prevalent one, while Pharan city, losing such an ally, fell into decay, and the mountain close by at length lost, in the memory of men, all its claims to be the scene of Jehovah's revelation?

Antoninus refers to a port on the Red Sea, which is evidently Ælа, the present Akaba, but his way did not lead him thither. He came from Sinai to Egypt, following "the regular highway," as he says, and evidently passing Pharan, although

[1] *Itinerarium Beati Antonini Martyris, ex Musæo Ch. Menardi Julimagi Andium*, ap. Petr. Auril. Typogr. 1640.

he does not mention its name. Yet the identity of the place which he describes with Pharan is unmistakeable. His words are as follows: "We now came to the place where Moses contended with Amalek. Here there was an oratorium [meaning probably a chapel or small convent—the same, it may be, whose ruins have been described by Burckhardt and Lepsius], its altar erected on the same rock where Moses stood while the battle was going on. In the same place we saw the walls of a strongly fortified city, but the place was very wild and destitute of water [yet Wadi Feiran is now remarkable for its luxuriant vegetation and abundant supplies of water]. Caravans of pilgrims come hither, the women and children bearing palm branches in their hands, and singing antiphonies in the Egyptian language. They carried ampullæ filled with oil, with which they anointed my head and feet." All this evidently refers to Pharan, where the Egyptian speech was in use, and where pilgrims were doubtless welcomed in this truly oriental fashion. There was, it is probable, a much closer connection between the church of Pharan with Alexandria than with the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with which the convent at Sinai was in more intimate alliance.

Antoninus then tells us of his farther journey; of his discovery of Elim, where were seventy palm trees and twelve springs; of passing a castle of moderate size, called Surandela, where stood a church and a hospitium, unmistakeably the Gharundel of modern travellers, where whatever vestiges may remain are utterly unfit for any of the uses of man. His journey ended at the place called Chlysma, at the head of the gulf, mentioned also in Cosmas' account of his tour.

From these accounts—which, although in many respects contradictory and mutually destructive, are yet the reports of eye-witnesses living between the third and the seventh centuries of the Christian era, and, with all their want of agreement, are singularly true to what we might expect to hear of the Sinai Peninsula, its physical character and the general course of its history—we gather thus much at least, that in those early times the country was far better supplied than at present with colonies, chapels, churches, hospices, convents, bishoprics, and Christian communities; that there were visible the beginnings of conversions among the Saracens; and that there was more

building, more artificial irrigation, more culture of the palm tree, and, as we gather from the account of Nilus, more agricultural prosperity in general, than we find in later times. And if we take into account the long period when the Nabathæans, whose history in any detail is unknown to us, practised the arts of trade and tillage over a district extending from Leuke Kome to the Ælanitic Gulf, and as far into the interior as Petra; if we also consider the extraordinary number of inscriptions, which, though of the roughest sort, must have been executed with considerable pains, and which testify not simply of the mere transit of vast hordes across the country, but imply a continuous existence there; when we take into account the fact that these inscriptions, as to meaning and authorship, are just as mysteriously unknown to us now as they were to Cosmas at the time of his early visit, it must strike the mind with great force, with what extreme difficulty and liability to err we undertake to leap over the space between the present forlorn state of the country and the state of its primitive prosperity, and the impossibility of reproducing the very scenes which presented themselves to the eyes of the Israelites during their forty years' journey, and which speak to us in the few faint tones which from that little fragment of time sound down to us through the thirty or forty centuries which have since intervened. And how foolish and short-sighted the attempt to go further back yet, and try with our imperfect knowledge to learn the condition of the country when the Midianites visited and passed through the Peninsula, when the Amalekites held dominion in it, when its north-western mountains opened their veins of ore to industrious Egyptian colonists, whose labours run back as far as to the second king of the twelfth dynasty of the ancient monarchy, and whose records are as old, according to Lepsius, as the very oldest in Egypt, and date back as far as to the pyramids of Ghizeh!

We pass from our brief review of the condition of Palestine while it was under Christian sway, to the desolation which fell upon it after it passed into Moslem hands. The glimpses which we gain of it under this blighting power are but few and brief; the Arabian geographers had but little to say of this portion of their domain, and the Peninsula lay in shadow till the light of the Crusades made it more visible. It is not,

however, till within our own time that it has passed under the observations of careful and enthusiastic travellers, who, although compelled to pass rapidly through the country, have given us those accounts which have conferred such honour on the names of Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Seetzen, Rüppell, Robinson, Ehrenberg, Laborde, Wellsted, von Schubert, and Lepsius. Yet even now, such is the shadow that rests upon the land, that there is not a single settlement of civilised man throughout the whole Peninsula, with the solitary exception of the hospitable convent at Sinai,—the only unshaken pillar that rises above the darkness of the middle ages, and the shadows of Mohammedan misrule, to the clear light which streamed from the holy mount where a higher Wisdom than that of Solon issued His law, not for Israel alone to obey, but for men everywhere to heed.

II. THE MOHAMMEDAN EPOCH.

The Arabian writers to whom we are indebted for allusions more or less explicit to the Sinai Peninsula, are Isstachri, Masudi, Edrisi, Abulfeda, Murach Machmed, Ebn Ishak, Nowairi, and Macrizi.

Isstachri, who wrote about the middle of the tenth century, makes no mention of the Peninsula by name, and alludes only incidentally to its boundaries. He speaks distinctly regarding el-Ghur (el-Ghor), however, as all later Arabic writers have done, as a true continuation of the Jordan valley to the Gulf of Ælа. He mentions Kolzum, at the head of the present Gulf of Suez, and describes the "deserts of the children of Israel and Sinai" in general terms as the country lying between Arabia, Falestine (Palestine), and Egypt. He speaks of the dangerous shores of the Red Sea, and alludes to a harbour called Chabilat between Kolzum and the mouth of that arm of the sea; but that name is not to be identified with any one of the twenty-seven names of ports which Ehrenberg has given in his recent exhaustive catalogue. But, says Isstachri, below Kolzum there are to be found on the coast no towns or cities, excepting here and there a fishing village, such as Taran (Pharan?), at the palm grove of Chabilat, and at the place which is the landing-place of Mount Tur [*i.e.* Sinai: he probably alludes to the port of Tor, which has, it would seem, received its

present name from its nearness to the holy mount, formerly called Tur, and now known as Sinai]. He also speaks distinctly of Æla and its inhabitants, who were Jews [Æla, now Akaba, was the Elath of the Bible], and who were said to be secured from Arab violence by virtue of a special safeguard from the hand of Mohammed.

Of the country lying between Æla and Kolzum, Isstachri says nothing more than that it was the wilderness of the children of Israel; that it was forty parasangs long, and the same in width; that the soil was partly sand, partly rock; and that here and there were palm trees and springs.[1]

Ebn Haukal[2] confirms the words of Isstachri, and adds that the wilderness of the Israelites was called the Tiah beni Israel, a name which both the Jewish and the Arab traditions recognise in the present el-Ty or Tih, meaning *the* wilderness, *the* desert, *par eminence*. We have the word in the present Beduin "et-Tih," which is usually coupled with the words, "of the Wandering," *i.e.* the Desert of Wandering. According to Rosenmüller,[3] the word Tyh itself signifies a straying around and around: hence it comes to mean the place where one wanders, or the desert, and the full name el-Tih beni Israel means the Wilderness of the Israelites' Wanderings.

Masudi,[4] in his *Golden Meadows*, written in the tenth century, gives us nothing new regarding the Sinai Peninsula, excepting a re-statement, evidently gathered from the garbled account in the Koran of the events which occurred at the giving of the law. Aaron's grave he puts at some unknown spot called Mowab near Mount Sinai,—a fearful burying-place, he says, on account of the wild uproar sometimes heard there in the night-time.

Edrisi[5] is the next who speaks particularly of this interesting region. He wrote in the twelfth century. He alludes to the two routes which pilgrims took in journeying from Egypt to

[1] Isstachri in *Mordtmann*, pp. 5, 6, 34, 35, 28, 18, 19.

[2] W. Ouseley, *Orient. Geog.* pp. 2, 29.

[3] Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Alterthumsk.* Bd. iii. p. 102, Not. 120.

[4] El Masudi's *Historical Encyclopedia*, entitled *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, trans. by Aloys Springer, M.D., London 1841, 8vo, vol. i. pp. 91, 92.

[5] Edrisi in *Jaubert*, i. pp. 328–331.

Medina: one of them leading through the heart of the country, direct from Ajerud near Suez to Ælа and Midian; the other along the coast some distance, and then by way of Sinai to Ælа. The three stations which he alludes to in his account of the direct route across the desert—Rouitha, Kersa, and Hafar—do not occur again in any writer. In his allusions to a place called Faran and Faran Ahroun, on the more southern route to which he refers, it is very difficult to ascertain whether he means the old and now ruined city at Wadi Feiran or not; for although there is no other place whose name at all resembles the one which he gives, yet it is coupled in his narrative very closely with a dangerous, stormy harbour, where tradition asserted that Pharaoh perished. If by this he meant the place now called Hammam Faroun, which the legends of the Arabs still point out as the scene of the Egyptian monarch's overthrow, there is not now to be seen a single trace of a city once there.

Edrisi goes on to say that the way to Sinai, there called Jebel Tur, turns away at that point from the sea. The road is a regularly built one, and passes a chapel and a brook of running water, and ascends the holy mountain, which is very lofty, by steps. From Tur [probably Jebel Tor] he went to a place called Massdef, where the inhabitants were engaged in the pearl fishery. I suppose this to be Tor harbour, but Burckhardt conjectured it to be some place on the Gulf of Ælа, although he sought in vain for any traces of the name given by Edrisi.

Abulfeda,[1] writing in the fourteenth century, goes over very much the same ground as Edrisi and Isstachri, but speaks much more fully than they did of Ælа, the scriptural Elath and the modern Akaba. Ælа, he says, lay at the entrance of the desert of Araba, where stood a tower under the charge of an officer sent from Egypt. The city had been protected still earlier by a small fortress on an island. This was in ruins at the time of Abulfeda's visit, and the commandant was living in the tower on the mainland. Both, island and fortress, have been seen in our day by Rüppell, Laborde, and Wellsted, and the tower has been visited by many travellers. Niebuhr, however, was

[1] Abulfeda, *Descr. Arabiæ*, ed. J. Grævius, Oxon 1712, p. 19; in Reinard's ed. p. 112; in Romnel's, pp. 12, 14, 18.

the first to discover that this place is identical with the Elath of the Bible; and he found that the Beduins even now called it Hüle, whose resemblance to Ælа is unmistakeable. From Ælа to Sherat, *i.e.* Seir, says Abulfeda, it is a three days' journey.

Seetzen[1] has inserted, in his letters to von Zach, and Burckhardt[2] in his travels, further allusions to Ælа found in the writings of the eminent Macrizi and other Arabians, which the curious student will find valuable.

To these brief allusions, which relate rather to what lies on the very boundaries of the Peninsula than to its interior, I add abstracts of visits made at a very early day, and while the country was under Arabian rule, to two very important and interesting central districts, Petra and Feiran, the former of which has been many hundred years forgotten and its location lost sight of, while the latter was the home of Christianity at a period so early that we cannot go behind it to any clear account of the wild savagery of its primitive history.

A. The Visit of Sultan Bibors to Petra and Karak in the Thirteenth Century.

The Egyptian historian Nowairi, who died in 1331, was the cotemporary of Abulfeda, to whom I have already referred, and was a voluminous author. Quatremère has translated[3] an account left by this writer of a visit made by Bibors, a warlike Egyptian sultan, who was in constant strife with the Franks, Syria, Palestine, and Damascus, and whose sway extended from 1260 till 1277. On one of the frequent journeys which he was obliged to pay to this country, he left Cairo and crossed the desert in a direct route. We will not follow his course over the first portion of the way, but join him at a place near the west entrance of Petra, and now called Nakber Rebay, where he spent the night before his important discovery :—

"When the next morning broke, the sultan ascended the mountain before him, which is of great extent, and encloses many wild gorges. It consists of a soft kind of stone, a sand-

[1] Seetzen in von Zach, *Monatl. Corresp.* 1809, Bd. xx. p. 305.

[2] Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*, p. 511.

[3] Quatremère, *Mem. sur les Nabatéens*, in *Journ. Asiat.* 1835, T. xv. pp. 31-34.

stone agglomerate, full of particoloured stripes—red, blue, and white [exactly corresponding to the colours which travellers tell us characterize the rocks at Petra now]. Through the mountain excavations have been made, capable of being traversed by a man on horseback [the long avenue east of Petra called el-Sîk]. At the left were seen stone steps and the grave of Aaron the brother of Moses; close by stood a castle called Aswit [the reputed grave of Israel's high priest, visited by Burckhardt and other recent travellers]. The sultan visited the lofty castle, and found it extraordinarily strong, and built in a very singular manner. He then descended and explored the 'Villages of the Children of Israel,' by which term he designates the wonderful grotto-like architectural remains of the place. The houses, he says, were sustained by columns, the outsides of the doorways covered with sculptures; the whole was a mass of grottos. The houses were as large as those which the sultan was in the habit of seeing; within there were arched walls, vestibules, treasure vaults, harems,—all, all hewn from the solid rock. He also saw the mountain walls parted by a roadway which ran between; both sides rising like a wall, and lined with long rows of houses.

"Thence the sultan, when he had seen everything, journeyed on to Shaubak [the Sjaubec of Edrisi and Abulfeda, the Mons regalis of the crusaders, and the place where Baldwin built a fortress; the Kerek el Shobak of Burckhardt[1]]. From that point he passed on to Karak."

This important account brings into view those distinct localities where names have, up to the most recent time, been much confounded,—Petra, Shaubak, and Karak, or Kerek; the last named being the one discovered by Burckhardt and Seetzen in Moab, east of the Dead Sea. Both of the last two played an important part in the history of the Crusades, for the reason that Petra, which would have been so prized a possession, had sunk into utter oblivion, and its name had been given to Kerek, which is called in middle-age histories Petra Deserti, and which gave this its conjectural name to the bishop of Petra, who commonly resided at Jerusalem. Shobak, which in the times of the Crusades was generally called Mons regalis, was also designated sometimes as Petra; and it is not wonderful

[1] Burckhardt, *Trav. in Syria*, p. 420.

that it should have been confounded with the true Nabathæan Petra. But in the account which Nowairi gives us, the three all appear clear and distinct; their mutual relations are correctly stated; and the time which it took for him to pass from one to the other [which is also given] exactly corresponds with the accounts of Seetzen, Burckhardt, Irby, Mangles, Laborde, Robinson, and others.

Nor does this account stand alone; for Macrizi[1] has confirmed the story of Nowairi, adding to it a few slight particulars, which show that his sources were independent, and that his narrative was not a mere copy. According to Macrizi, the houses in this ancient and deserted city were not entirely destitute of contents; for in them the Egyptian sultan found jars, and some stuffs which crumbled as soon as he took them up. He discovered also nine pieces of gold, on each of which was impressed the figure of a gazelle, and some inscriptions, which he conjectured to be Hebrew, but which may have been Nabathæan. After digging down under a square stone, they discovered in one place water, which was as cold as ice. The reader may recall the statements of some modern travellers regarding this characteristic of the water at Petra.

B. Macrizi on Wadi Feiran, the City of the Amalekites, Tur Sina and its Convent.

Burckhardt,[2] in his passage through the Peninsula in 1816, was enabled to gather up from Macrizi's writings the following fragmentary allusions to the above-mentioned interesting localities, when he visited the country in the year 1445.

Faran, according to Macrizi, is one of the cities of the Amalekites, near the shore of the Sea of Kolzum, on a hill between two mountains, where are found caves full of human skeletons. It is [in a straight line] one day's journey from that part of the Sea of Kolzum where Pharaoh perished with all his host. Between the city of Faran and Tyh [the mountain chain?] it is a two days' journey. This is not the Faran [Paran?] mentioned in the Pentateuch: the place belonged to the Midianite cities, and continued to do so, down, according

[1] Et. Quatremère, *Mem. geogr. et histor. sur l'Egypte*, etc., Paris 1811, T. i. pp. 187, 188.

[2] Burckhardt, *Trav. in Syria*, p. 617.

to Macrizi, nearly to his own time. There is there a large number of date-palm trees, of whose fruit he professes to have eaten. A great river was flowing close by. The city was then in ruins: only Beduins formed its inhabitants.

In Macrizi's *History of the Copts*,[1] there are the following particulars to be gleaned regarding Sinai and its convent: The monastery of el-Tur is so called because the mountain on which it stands is called Tur, or mainly Tur Sina. Christian and Jewish writers agree in this, that upon this Peor el-Tur, where God displayed himself to Moses, up to the present time [1445], the convent has been in the possession of the Milikites [a sect?]. It is inhabited; and there are gardens close by, in which are palm and fruit trees and vines. Tur Sina is the mountain where the burning bush was seen by Moses, and where he was overpowered with terror at beholding the glory of the Lord. The convent is built of black stone; the breadth of the walls is three ells; it has three iron doors, etc. Within the building there is a spring of water: outside there is another spring, about which wonderful stories are told. The convent is inhabited by monks: it is visited by strangers, however, and its renown has formed the subjects of poets' strains.

Between Sinai and the city of Kolzum there are two routes, one by land, the other by water. Both pass the city of Faran, one of the Amalekite strongholds. From Faran to Kolzum it is a three days' journey: to el-Tur it is only a two days' march. There are 6666 steps to be taken in ascending the Tur mountain. Half-way up there is a church, named after the prophet Elijah; and on the summit another, which bears the name of Moses. This is the place where the Lord talked with Moses, and the latter dashed the tables to pieces. There are now [1445] no perfect portions of those two chapels: both are in ruins.

III. ARABIA PETRÆA AND NABATHÆA

ACCORDING TO THE ACCOUNTS OF GREEK AND ROMAN WRITERS—THE ALLUSIONS OF STRABO, PLINY, AND DIODORUS OF SICILY—THE EXPEDITIONS OF ANTIGONUS AGAINST PETRA.

The earliest accounts of the Greeks and Romans regarding the Sinaitic region do not run further back than to the time

[1] Macrizi, *Gesch. der Copten*, Gottingen 1845, p. 113.

of Alexander the Great; for the whole Arabian Peninsula was, so to speak, a country to be discovered by him. An officer appointed by him, Hiero of Sicily, had the task assigned to him of sailing in a thirty-oared vessel from the mouth of the Euphrates, round the southern extremity of Arabia, and not finishing his voyage till he reached the head of the Gulf of Suez; but the task was too great, and he returned to Alexander with the statement that the Arabian Peninsula was as vast as the Indian one.

When the Ptolemies ascended the throne of Egypt, it was one of the first enterprises which they entered upon, to learn the character of the Indian Ocean, in order to promote commerce with Sabæa and India. The result of these efforts naturally was to enlarge the existing state of knowledge regarding the coast of the Sinai Peninsula, although, since this was not made a distinct object, the result was very incomplete.

But the art of navigation was very imperfectly applied to the whole of the Red Sea; and mariners, not daring to venture out to any distance, held their timid course along the shores, where, however, they were really exposed to the greatest dangers. The lords of the whole Sinai district, as well as of its coast, were the Nabathæans, a bold and powerful commercial people, the rivals of Egypt in the Indian trade, and unscrupulous corsairs on the Red Sea. Despite their contact with many prominent nations, Egypt, Babylon, Phœnicia, Arabia, the nature of their polity was such, that we gain no perfect conception of the state of the country while it was under their rule. Strabo is the first writer who alluded to the glory of Petra, the Nabathæan capital; and from Strabo, too, we learn that the people of Petra lived at peace with one another, but in a determined resistance to all foreign powers: so that when the Romans, under Augustus, wished to become their allies, they stedfastly refused.

The earliest clear view which we have of the characteristics of the Nabathæans, is given us by Diodorus Siculus,[1] who recounts the story of the two expeditions sent by Antigonus, the successor of Alexander, to subdue Petra, and subjugate its inhabitants.

[1] Ritter, *zur Gesch. der Petræisch. Arab. in den Berlin. Abhandl. der Akad. d. Wissensch. vom g.* 1824, Berlin 1826, pp. 194–201.

The first of these expeditions was entrusted to Athenæus, the second to Polyorketes the son of Antigonus, and took place about 310 B.C. Without entering minutely into the details of the expedition, it may be enough to say of the first that it was entirely successful. The people of Petra were mostly absent, celebrating elsewhere a religious festival; but the Greek general, taking advantage of the circumstance, sacked the city, slew the most of those who were there, and escaped with his plunder. But the Nabathæans followed him, and falling upon his army while it was asleep, put it to the sword. The sketch which Diodorus gives of Petra and its people, does not very widely differ from one which would be given now, except for the ruins. He goes so far as to use the word Arab to designate the inhabitants, not discriminating between Arabs, Idumæans, and Nabathæans. Their country, he says, is destitute of rivers, brooks, and springs. It is the law of their land neither to sow grain, to plant fruit trees, nor to drink wine [which, as Wasseling observes, is exactly like the statute prevalent among the children of Jonadab, son of Rechab, Jer. xxxv. 6–10, who claimed that they were connected with the descendants of Hobab the Midianite]. The inhabitants of Petra and its neighbourhood are not permitted to build permanent houses, lest they should excite the cupidity of foreign nations, and be subjugated. A portion of them train camels; some tend sheep; very many are engaged in the transporting of myrrh, frankincense, and spices from Arabia Felix. Freedom they love above all things, and when they are attacked they resort to flight rather than be taken captive; but since their country is not rich in water, they are not liable to invasion.

The result of Demetrius' expedition against the Nabathæans was very different from that of his predecessor. He surrounded Petra, and prepared to besiege it. The people showed a brave front at first; but afterwards, in order to escape slaughter, they went so far as to say that they were ready to take one of two courses,—to resist bravely, or to pay a large sum of money to the Greeks if they would withdraw without a battle. The latter course was adopted, and the attacking general withdrew.

Pompey, Julius Cæsar,[1] and Augustus, all attempted to bring Petra under the yoke of Rome. This result was not

[1] Quatremère, *Mém. sur les Nabatéens*, in *Journ. As.* 1835, T. xv. p. 10.

accomplished, however, till the reign of Trajan, whose prefect Cornelius Palma subdued the city. This was in the year 105: the list of the Nabathæan kings closes, however, A.D. 50;[1] and since the time of Trajan no royal name has been connected with that rock-built city.

Strabo, who wrote at the time of the Emperor Augustus, has given us some particulars regarding Petra, for which he was indebted to his friend the philosopher Athenodoros, who had visited the place. He says that it lay in a level region, but was itself surrounded by rocks, which on the outer side were steep and inaccessible, but within were hollowed out for houses, and supplied with gardens and an abundance of springs. The district in the neighbourhood, particularly on the side towards Judæa, was an arid desert.

Pliny also alludes to Petra; yet while giving an accurate picture of its condition, he makes serious mistakes regarding its distance from prominent points. He says: "In the midst of the country of the Nabathæans lies the city of Petra, within a vale, which we can walk around in three-quarters of an hour. It is surrounded on all sides by inaccessible mountains, and a brook flows through its heart." He then goes on to speak of the distance of Petra from Gaza and other well-known points.

SEC. 2. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ARABIA PETRÆA,

AS DETAILED IN THE WRITINGS OF CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY, JOSEPHUS, EUSEBIUS OF CÆSAREA, AND JEROME, IN THE TABULA PEUTINGERIANA, THE ITINERARIUM ANTONINI, AND THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM, ETC.

I. ACCORDING TO CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY.

The localities assigned by this writer[2] have come to us in so confused a state, that they are quite untrustworthy, although Gosselin[3] has attempted to prove their validity. The names

[1] Vincent, *Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients*, Lond. 1807, vol. ii. p. 275.

[2] Cl. Ptolemæus, lib. v. c. 17, ed. Bertii, fol. 140, p. 112.

[3] Gosselin, *Recherches sur la Géographie systematique des Anciens*, Paris, pp. 162, 239 *et seq.*

which he gives are, on the contrary, very accurate. Sinai, however, he does not mention at all. The people who lived directly south of Judæa he calls Saracens,—a name which, at a later period, was universally applied to the nomad tribes ranging between Syria and Egypt. South of the Saracens he locates the Munichiates, of whom we know nothing; and yet farther south the Pharanites. By this term it is impossible to tell whether they gave the name Pharan to the place where they lived, or received their own designation from it. That at the time of the passage of the Israelites there was a similar name applied to a place, not at the south, but at the north of the Peninsula, near the Canaanite border, and at the location of Kadesh-Barnea, is certain (Num. x. 12). The wilderness of Paran, into which they passed after leaving Sinai, was either identical with that of Zin, or it lay in such a position that Kadesh, the place whence the spies departed to view the promised land, was directly on the border where Paran and Zin met (Num. xiii. 3, 21, 26, and xx. 1). Josephus[1] also speaks of a valley of Paran, abounding in caverns, in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea; and this had, it may be supposed, some connection with the wilderness of Paran or Pharan (for both spellings are given) of Scripture.

From the wide diffusion of this name over the Peninsula (doubtless one indigenous to the land, and still found in the Faran and Feiran of our day), and its application to many different physical features (for in Deut. xxxiii. 2 we have a Mount Paran, indicating Sinai, and in Ptolemy we have a people called Pharanites), it is easy to see how in modern times the places designated have been confounded, and that it is sometimes hard to distinguish whether localities in the southern or in the northern part of the country are referred to.

II. THE MAIN ROADS OF ARABIA PETRÆA, ACCORDING TO THE TABULA PEUTINGERIANA.

In order to correct the topographical details in Ptolemy's account, Mannert[2] has compared them with those given in the

[1] Josephus, *de B. Jud.* iv. 9, 4.

[2] *Tabula Itineraria Peutingeriana, etc.*, ed. C. Mannert, Lips. 1824.

itinerary now cited, and with the help of modern discoveries has solved the difficulties which seemed most stubborn.

This table of Peutinger was unquestionably the early guide of almost all travellers in Arabia Petræa; because, after the dominion which Trajan gained over the country, its materials could be collected in a time of peace. The first edition of this work was prepared, according to Mannert, in the third century. At that time there was a great public road from Æla to Damascus, passing along the eastern limits of the Roman possessions, and in direct connection, by means of side routes, with Jerusalem,—a route which does not appear at all in the later *Itinerarium Antonini*, written in the fifth and sixth centuries; because at that time the Roman power was on the wane, and the Moslem power in the ascendant. The Hadj route to Mecca had already come to supersede the ancient pilgrim road to Jerusalem.

The *Tabula Peutingeriana* indicates two main roads from Æla (the ancient Elath) to Jerusalem: an eastern one by way of Petra, passing the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and connecting with a cross route leading to the Jewish capital; and a westerly one, passing through the very heart of the desert thither. The first of these I will designate as the Petra route, the second as that of the wilderness.

The *Tabula Peutingeriana* also mentions a subordinate road leading from Clysma, near Suez, *via* Pharan, to Æla; another running from Pelusium to Gaza, or rather to Askelon; and still another from Askelon to Jerusalem.

On these roads are to be found the points of main interest mentioned in the writings of most early travellers through this country. Allusions to these are scattered over the writings of Josephus, through the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the episcopal *Acta*, and the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius and Jerome. From these allusions it is possible, in most cases, to indicate the places specified with a certain degree of accuracy; to do which, however, has been largely the result of the discoveries made by the travellers of our own day.

The *Tabula Peutingeriana* on the two routes from Æla to Jerusalem:—

a. The Eastern or Petra Route.—Ten Stations.

	Mille Pass.	Eng. Miles.
From Haila (Æla) to Diana, ...	16	14⅓
Thence to Presidio, ...	21	19⅙
„ Haurana, ...	24	22
„ Zadogatta, ...	20	18⅓
„ Petris (Petra), ...	18	15½
„ Negla (Hegla?), ...	22	20
„ Thornia (probably Thoana). The number is omitted.		
„ Rababatora (Rabbath Moab), . .	48	44
„ Thamara, ...	68	62
„ Jerusalem, ...	53	48½

The entire distance by this route may be summed up, therefore, as not very far from 264 English miles.

This list is capable of verification to a remarkable degree, so far as it relates to places south of Petra; for the ancient Roman road still retains sufficient monuments of the past to allow Laborde[1] to prepare his instructive papers and map.

Robinson estimates the direct route from Æla to Petra to be sixty-four English geographical miles in length,—a sum which agrees well with that just cited, when the windings are taken into account.

The stations north of Petra, and between it and Jerusalem, are much more difficult to identify, since not only very many of the Byzantine names have passed away, but the omitted number at Thornia indicates a bend in the road, which it is impossible now to supply, except conjecturally. Besides, the whole nature of the country is different from that farther south, where the gorges in the rock, the narrow wadis, the springs, remains of fortress walls, and artificial cisterns, which so unmistakeably indicate the lines of ancient Roman roads, direct the traveller to a plainly discerned and comfortable highway. Yet on the northern portion of the route there are several localities observed by Burckhardt and Robinson, such as Kadesh-Barnea, Thamara, Aroer, Malatha (the modern Ain el Weibeh, Kurnub, Ararah, Tell el Milh), and many others on the road to Hebron, which have been identified almost beyond a doubt with those mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

[1] Léon de Laborde et Linant, *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée*, Paris 1830, fol. pp. 61–63.

b. The Western or Wilderness Route, from Ælа to Jerusalem.—Seven Stations.

	Mille Pass.	Eng. Miles.
From Haila (Ela) to Diana, ...	16	14⅓
Thence to Rasa (probably Gerasa), ...	16	14⅓
,, Cypsoria (Gypsoria), ...	16	14⅓
,, Lysa, ...	28	26⅔
,, Oboda (Ebuda), ...	48	44
,, Elysa (Elusa), ...	24	22
,, Jerusalem, ...	71	65

The whole distance by this route is therefore about two hundred miles, sixty-five less than by the Petra route, which ran along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea as far as Rabbath Moab and Philadelphia (Rabbath Ammon), and was joined there by a side road leading to the west side of the Dead Sea.

The Rababatora of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the Rabbath Moab just alluded to, was, as Mannert has shown, the ancient metropolis of the Moabites, sought after by both Seetzen and Burckhardt. Philadelphia (Rabbath Ammon) was fifty-seven miles farther north, and was the chief city of the Ammonites. Seetzen discovered[1] it in 1806.

Despite the light which has been thrown upon the places mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, there are about twenty given in Ptolemy's account, which are not alluded to in the work which we are at present citing. Of four of these I will briefly speak, in consequence of their importance, or of the place which they hold in the Scriptures. They are Characmobra, Sebunta, Bostra, and Zoara.

Characmobra, which Ptolemy wrongly places a short distance south of Petra, is undoubtedly the city of Kerak, lying some days' distance north of the famous Edomite stronghold. Its name, which signified nothing more than the capital of Moab, is still to be found in the prosperous Kerek, lying a half-day's journey south of the ruins of Rabbath Moab, on the south-east margin of the Dead Sea. It was discovered by Seetzen in 1806, and independently of him by Burckhardt in 1812. It is the most northern of three Petras spoken of by ancient authors, and is the one which was meant in the title of the bishop alluded to on a preceding page, whose see comprised that district, and who, although residing in Jerusalem, was styled Episcopus Petra Deserti. In the year 536, a bishop who

[1] *Mon. Corresp.* xviii., 1808, p. 429.

attended the Council of Jerusalem subscribed himself Episcopus Demetrius, of the Ecclesia Characmobra, apparently the corruption of Karak Moab.

Sebunta, also written Esbunta, is the Heshbon of the Bible, the head city of the king of the Amorites (Josh. xiii. 21, 27).

Bostra, also written by the Greeks and Romans Bozra and Bosra, and wrongly considered a city of the Moabites, lies really outside of the ground covered by the works now under consideration, although Ptolemy treated it as if a place in Arabia Petræa. It is to be carefully observed by the reader, that in all writers except the latest—such, for example, as Reland, Gesenius, and Rosenmüller—this Bostra, the capital of Hauran (Auranitis), has been confounded with a far more ancient but entirely different city more to the south, written Bostra, Bozra, Bozrah, Bazra, and Botsra, and which was the capital of Edom. Jerome did not fall into this error, however, but alluded distinctly to the latter, calling it Bosor, as *alia civitas Esau in montibus Idumæa.* But since no such Bozrah was known in Edom, writers felt obliged to extend its limits unwarrantably far towards the north, so as to include Bostra of Hauran. But Edom always lay between the Dead and the Red Seas: the Edomites were never a people strong enough to subdue those formidable neighbours at their north, the Midianites, Ammonites, and Moabites. We know that, at the time when Moses passed through Edom, the capital, Bozrah, had for a long time had the Edomite kings resident there (Gen. xxxvi. 33). And when the Israelite leader sent messengers demanding permission to pass through Edom, they did not go to distant Hauran: Bozrah, the capital, lay near by (Num. xx. 14–21). The name is often coupled with Teman in the Bible; but where such a place was to be looked for has not been known till very recently (Amos i. 12; Isa. xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlix. 13, 22). Seetzen learned of a native of Hebron, that a Tophila or Tophel (a biblical locality never till then ascertained, Deut. i. 1) lies at the south of the Dead Sea, and that near it is a southern Bozrah, which was formerly the capital of Edom, as this Tophel or Tophila is of Jebal at the present day. The latter place Burckhardt afterwards visited, and described it as Tafyle, but did not suspect its connection with the Tophel of the Bible. Two hours' distance south of this Tafyle, Burckhardt dis-

covered the village of Besseyra or Busseyra, which he as well as Robinson, who writes it Buserràh, hold to occupy the site of the ancient Bozrah. With this Quatremère entirely coincides. The ancient Bozrah is therefore found to be in Jebal, and is not to be confounded with Ptolemy's Bostra much farther north.

Zoar is the very ancient name of one of the five cities which stood on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, and was the only one of the five which did not perish at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xiv. 2, 8). It is mentioned in the Bible under the additional name of Bela, *i.e.* Destruction; but its name Zoar is translated in the Hebrew, Littleness. In the Greek it is written Segor (Σηγώρ). It can only be looked for at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. I shall have occasion to allude to it again when citing the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

III. THE ALLUSIONS TO ARABIA PETRÆA IN THE NOTITIA DIGNITATUM ORIENTIS,[1] THE ORIENS CHRISTIANUS,[2] THE ONOMASTICON URBIUM ET LOCORUM SACRÆ SCRIPTURÆ. BEROSABA (BEERSHEBA)—CHERMULE (CARMEL)—ZOAR—BIRSAMA—MENOIDA—ZADACATHA—HAUARA—RABATHE—SABURRA—MOABITÆ—ÆLIA CAPITOLINA (JERUSALEM)—ÆLA.

In the *Itinerarium Antonini*, written, it is supposed, in the fifth century, we have not a glimpse of any of the cities which had come under the Roman dominion, Petra and Ælа excepted: in the much more recent journeys of Hierocles through the diocese of Palæstina Tertia, only Petra Augustopolus (elsewhere unmentioned), Arindela, Characmouba, Areopolis, Zoara, Mamphis, Bitarus, Elusa, and Salton, alone are mentioned, but without any data to enable us to fix their localities. But happily the deficiency is slightly supplied by the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a list published by authority of the places where imperial troops were regularly stationed. To this we may add the hints which are gained by the signatures of bishops, appended to the reports of the great ecclesiastical councils. Yet these data, after all, are exceedingly meagre, consisting mainly of mere

[1] *Notitia Dignitatum et administrationum omnium, etc.*, tom. i.; *Notitia Orientis, cum Commentario*, ed. Böcking, Bonnæ 1839, 8vo, c. xxix. pp. 78, 341.

[2] Mich. le Quien, *Ord. Fratr. Prædicator*, *Oriens Christianus*, Parisiis 1740, fol. tom. iii. fol. 722-770.

names, utterly unconnected and unsuggestive. They would be of little value, had it not been for the great light which Eusebius and Jerome have thrown upon them in their geographical list[1] of Scripture names,—a work of undoubted authenticity, being made up from original sources collected in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The *Notitia Dignitatum* refers to the following important stations, together with a large number which are unimportant: Berosaba or Beersheba, Churmule or Carmel, Zoar, Birsama, Menoida, Zadacatha, Hauara, Rabatha, Saharra, Moabitæ, and Ælа.

1. Berosaba or Beersheba, *i.e.*, according to Gesenius, the Fountains of the Oath; according to others, the Fountains of the Seven, that is, of the seven lambs which Abraham gave to Abimelech in return for the wells which the latter delivered to him (Gen. xxi. 28–30); and the place alluded to in Judg. xx. 1, and very frequently in Samuel, in the expression from Dan to Beersheba. Dan was the most northern and Beersheba the most southern place settled by the Israelites; and the latter continued to be important as a means of defence to the Romans against the inroads of the turbulent and savage Saracens. According to Jerome, it was twenty mill. pass. (eight hours) from Hebron; and even in the middle of the fourth century it contained a strong garrison, to protect the southern border of Palestine against assaults by the inhabitants of Edom. It was assigned both to the tribe of Judah and to that of Benjamin, which ought not to perplex us, or lead us into error, if we remember that the warriors of Judah sometimes encamped for a long time in the division of Benjamin, which was certainly a long way from the Edomite border. Joshua expressly states that Beersheba belonged to the twenty-nine border cities which defended the promised land against Edom.

When Seetzen[2] set out, in March 1807, on his journey towards the wilderness traversed by the children of Israel, the first day's march from Hebron, in a south-westerly direction,

[1] *Onomasticon Urbium et Locorum Sacræ Scripturæ, seu Liber de Locis Hebraicis, Græca primum ab Eusebio Cæsariensi, deinde Latini scriptus ab Hieronymo.* Opera Jac. Bonfrerii, rec. Joan. Clericus, in Blas Ugolini *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum, etc.*, Venetiis 1746, fol. vol. v. fol. ii.–ccclxxix.

[2] *Mon. Corresp.* 1808, vol. xvii. pp. 142, 143.

brought him to the village of Sanuta, the place whence the Suez caravans entered upon their distinct route. This was the last inhabited place before passing into the desert. On the next day he rode six hours farther on to the camp of his Arab guide Sibben, which he reached at three o'clock in the afternoon. While on the way thither he encountered a broad plain, extending south-westward as far as the eye could reach towards Gaza, and eastward also for a great distance. This he speaks of as one of the largest plains in all Palestine. He found some camel-drivers here, who brought him a draught of new milk. They told him that two hours eastward he would find the ruins of Szabea, with five or six wells or springs, of which only two now are cleared out, but they hold much water; one of them, in particular, being of uncommon size. This led to Seetzen's discovery of the identity of the present Szbea with the ancient Bir es Szbea, or Beersheba, as it now appears in a corrupted form. He was very much struck with the remarkable agreement between the customs of the people now dwelling there and those of the inhabitants when king Abimelech was the lord of the whole district, and when Abraham dwelt for a time in tents, not unlike those which now dot the plain. But Seetzen could not then visit the place, on whose existence he nevertheless threw so much light; but in 1838, Robinson, then on his return from Petra, explored it in person. He found that it now bears the name Bir es Seba, *i.e.* the Lions' Springs, not the Springs of the Seven. The wells, round, well walled in, had all the marks of great antiquity. There were ruins on a hill near by, but not such as would denote that a city was ever there. The distance thence to Hebron Robinson found to be twelve hours with his camel train, or about twenty-five English miles, *i.e.* thirty-one Roman miles, and not twenty, as Eusebius and Jerome give it. But this place is to be regarded as unquestionably the scene of that long sojourn of Abraham and Abimelech which led to such important results in the later history of Palestine.

Robinson discovered no relics of church edifices there; yet in the Greek *Acta* a bishopric is said to have had its seat at Birosaba in Palæstina Tertia, and one in Palæstina Prima, at *Σάλτων Βορσαμών*. From this we see clearly that Beersheba was identical with Salton, and that the position of this double-named

place was at the line of contact between Palæstina Tertia and Palæstina Prima.[1] It is also clear that the land of Gerar lay in the same vicinity; for we read in *Theodoreti Quest.* i. in Lib. H. Paralipom., that at his time the place even then called Salton lay in the territory of Gerar or Beersheba. The location of Salton, elsewhere only named in the *Synecd. Hieroclis*, and in the *Notit. Dignitatum*,[2] thus becomes determined; and that of Gerar[3] also, which was a part of the territory belonging to Abimelech the king of the Philistines (Gen. xxvi. 1, 8). It lay south-west of Gaza, between Kadesh and Shur (Gen. xx. 1). This settles the boundary line of Canaan; for we read (Gen. x. 19), "And the border of the Caananites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza."

Reland[4] showed that the crusaders were in error in looking for Beersheba—which, according to Josh. xv. 28, was a defence against Edom—between Hebron and Askelon.

2. Chermule, Kurmul, Carmel. A second garrison city, situated at no great distance south-east from Hebron; according to Jerome, at the tenth milestone thence: a place whose name is not to be confounded with Mount Carmel. Robinson was the first to discover this important locality,—the ruins of the ancient city and its fortress. He found it to be not ten, but, at the highest, eight Roman miles from Hebron. It is the Carmel of the mountains of Judah, where Saul erected a monument after his victory over the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv. 12, xxv. 2), who dwelt there, it appears, on the south-east border towards Edom, having removed from the Sinai mountains, where Moses overcame them.

3. Zoar. At the time of Ptolemy, as we learned above, Zoar was the single remaining city of the ancient Pentapolis. It had not then become a Roman *præsidium*, as we gather from the silence of Eusebius and Jerome;[5] but it was made so, doubtless, shortly after. Steph. Byz. states, *s.v.* *Ζόαρα*, that in his time it was a large place and a noted stronghold. Jerome says of it

[1] H. Relandus, *Palæstina ex Monumentis veteribus illustrata*, ed. Norimb. 1716, lib. i. c. 35, p. 159, et lib. iii.; *de Urb.* p. 463.

[2] *Notit. Dignitatum*, ed. Böcking, p. 363.

[3] Rosenmüller, *Handb. d. bibl. Alterthumsk.* v. ii. p. 390.

[4] H. Relandus, *Pal. vet. l.c.* 463.

[5] *Onomastic. Urb. et Locor. s.v.* Segor, Bala, et Zochora.

that it is a populous city of the Moabites, bearing the usual name of Bala (Josh. xv. 29); that it is the smallest of the five cities mentioned in Gen. xix. 20; whence Jerome derives the name (Hieron. *ad Jes.* 15), *appellatur Bala, id est absorpta.* He says, further, that now it bears the name Zoar, or Tsoar, among the Syrians, but that the Hebrews call it Segor.

This place is not to be looked for on the south-west side of the Dead Sea, where Robinson found the name Zuweirah (the el-Zowar of Irby and Mangles), which sounds not unlike it; it must, on the contrary, be sought on the south-eastern shore, for Jerome speaks of it as in the neighbourhood of two Moabite cities whose location he mentioned. In his note on Isa. xv. 5 he places it on the boundary between Moab and the land of the Philistines.[1] Eusebius' statement that the Salt Sea lies between Jericho and Zoar, and that Luith, a Moabite city, lies between Areopolis and Zoar, confirms this.[1] That in the fifth and sixth centuries a bishopric had its seat there, is testified by the signatures of three bishops. The place is mentioned still later in the *Excerpt. ex notit. veter. ecclesiasticis.*[2] A tradition of the name Segor (Zoghar), and of the place, probably reached the ears of the crusaders; for Fulcher Carnotensis,[3] pressed, in the year 1100, to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, discovered a place called Segor, inhabited by agricultural Arabs, who mostly fled at his approach. The place was beautiful, thickly studded with palm trees: it received from the crusaders, in consequence, the name Villa Palmorum. But this name did not take root, and only the old designation Zoghar outlived the Crusades. The palms have now all passed away. In the most probable location of the ancient city and fortress of Zoar, described even by Steph. Byz. as *κώμη μεγάλη, ἢ φρούριον, κ.τ.λ.*, there are now to be seen the ruins of a place of evident importance. No familiar name is coupled with it, however. Burckhardt sought in vain to find some traces of the ancient appellation. Irby and Mangles,[4] in the course of their explorations around the southern portion of the Dead Sea, found near the mouth of the

[1] *Onomastic. sub v.* Luith, et Mare Salinum.

[2] H. Relandus, *Pal.* lib. i. c. 35.

[3] Ful. Carnotensis, *Gesta peregrinantium Francorum cum armis Hierusalem pergentium*, in Bougar's *Gesta Dei per Francos*, Hanoviæ, T. i. fol. 405.

[4] Irby and Mangles' *Travels*, London 1823, pp. 447-449

Dara (on Kiepert's map Deraah) the traces of ancient human habitations. They were scattered over a considerable tract of territory, and seemed to them to indicate the former existence there of an important city. They, as well as Robinson, felt warranted, therefore, in supposing that it was the site of the ancient Segor, or Zoar.

4. Birsama. This place, whose name is also written *Βιρσαμώυ* and Betzames, is the Bethshemesh of the Bible—Bet Shemesh, *i.e.* House of the Sun—and was one of the cities of Judah originally given to the Levites (Josh. xxi. 16). Jerome speaks of it as on the road from Eleutheropolis to Nicopolis, that is, between Jerusalem and Gaza; and its ruins were discovered there by Robinson, bearing the name Ain Shems (*ain*, spring, being often substituted for *bet*, house). It is therefore not in Arabia Petræa proper, although in a military sense it may have been included in it; and it is of little importance excepting as a landmark to enable us to determine the location of important places,—such, for example, as Eleutheropolis.

5. Menoida: This belongs among the localities in the neighbourhood of Gaza, of which little is known. It is mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, and in 451 it had a bishop.

6. Zodocatha. A city little known, the fourth station on the Roman road indicated in the *Tabul. Peutin.* from Ælana to Petra. Burckhardt considers it the modern Szadake.

7. Hauara. The third station of the eastern Roman road from Ælana to Zodocatha and Petra.

8. Rabatha.
9. Sahurra.
10. Moabitæ.

These three stations are so indefinitely alluded to in the text,[1] that their position is only a subject of hypothesis.

11. Jerusalem. Known as Ælia Capitolina.

12. Ælana. Eusebius and Jerome speak of this place under the appellations of Ælath, *Αἰλάμ*, and Ælas. They place it at the southernmost extremity of the Roman empire, and say that in their time the Legio Romana Decima was stationed there. It was even then no longer called Ælath (the Elath of the Old Testament), but Ælana.

Steph. Byz. designates it as Ælaina. Theodoret speaks of it[2] as a port whence ships sailed in his day to India, and ranks

[1] *Notit. Dig.* ed. Böcking, p. 346.

[2] Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, *l.c.* T. iii. fol. 758.

it with the other three harbours of the Red Sea—Berenici, Clysma, and Ælа. Among the records of the Council of Nice it is mentioned as the seat of a bishopric. This was in the year 320. Situated at the very extremity of the Roman empire, this place had often to serve as a place of exile,[1]—as, for example, for the patriarch Elias of Constantinople, who was banished thither. In the *Martyrolog. illustr. Christ. martyr. lecti Triumphi*, p. 107, we read that the Blemmyans, a race of pirates formerly infesting the Red Sea, once sailed to Clysma, seized a ship which came thither from Ælа, and compelled the sailors to sail back and storm the place whence they came. The result was that many lives were lost. There seems, after Mohammed's subjection of the whole neighbouring region, to have been a Christian population long permitted to remain at Ælа.

IV. OTHER EPISCOPATES IN ARABIA PETRÆA:

ARINDELA—AREOPOLIS—ELUSA—AUGUSTOPOLIS—ARAD—THAMARA—AROER—MOLADA—PHŒNUS—THANA—THEMAN—EBODA.

The other Byzantine garrison stations are hard to locate, the data are so meagre. There remains therefore little to be attempted, excepting with the aid of Böcking to indicate the episcopal residences, which seem to have had some prominence, and which have been localized by modern travellers with a good degree of certainty. The names of such as I shall refer to are given in the heading above.

1. Arindela. This name is allied with the word Gharundel, which is found in various parts of Arabia Petræa. It was discovered by Irby and Mangles[2] in 1818. Burckhardt passed in the immediate vicinity of its ruins, without hearing its name, and located a Wadi Gharundel south-west of Petra. But the ancient Arindela lies north of Petra, on the route thence by way of Shaubak and el-Buseirah (Bozrah) to Tafyle (Tophel). It is north-east of Dhana (Thoana) and south of el-Buseirah.

2. Areopolis or Rabbath Moab. This city has already been referred to in this work as the Rhababatora of the *Tab. Peut.* and the Rhabatmoba of Ptolemy. In the *Notit. Dignit.*[3] it is

[1] Quatremère, *Mem. sur les Nabatéens*, p. 46.

[2] Irby and Mangles, *Travels*, p. 376.

[3] *Notit. Dignit.* ed. Böcking, c. xxx. p. 81, and No. 11, p. 364.

represented as standing under the sway of the Dux Arabiæ, and as a garrison station of the Roman empire. This post closed the long line of Roman strongholds stretching from the Ælanitic Gulf to the north-eastern coast of the Dead Sea, —Mohhæla, Æla, Præsidium, Harana, Zodocatha, Arindela, Areopolis. Jerome tells us decisively that in his time the city Rabbath Moab bore the name Areopolis, or the city of Ar. It received that designation as the capital (Rabbath) of Moabitis, and Ar (on the Arnon) was another name of the same royal residence of Moab. Ar and Arnon are used indiscriminately. Ar is, however, the oldest name, and by that designation it is referred to in Deut. ii. 9 and Num. xxi. 28. Areopolis appears as the seat of a bishopric in the fifth and sixth centuries.

3. Elusa, called in the *Tab. Peut.* Elysa, and in the western route given there, is nowhere mentioned in the Bible; and the conjecture of Bochart, that the name is cognate with the Alush mentioned in Num. xxxiii. 13, is entirely untenable. Elusa was the seat of a bishopric, and its ruins are found in the Wadi Ruhaibeh, near the modern village of el-Khulasa.

4. Augustopolis is a city completely unknown to us: it is mentioned by Hieroclis Synecdemus[1] as the site of a bishopric, and the names of two bishops resident there have come down to us; but beside this we have nothing.

5. Arad, little known as the seat of a bishopric, since only two episcopal signatures have come down to us. The name is given, however, by both Eusebius and Jerome, as a city once standing on the southern frontier of Judah, twenty mille pass. south from Hebron, and four from the ancient Moladah. These data have been of important service in enabling modern travellers to identify its remains and location; for it is a place not without interest, particularly in connection with the entering of the Israelites into Canaan. In Judg. i. 16 we read: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad." And again, in Num. xxi. 1, we read: "And when king Arad the Canaanite [*i.e.* the king of Arad], which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners." And

[1] Hieroclis Synecdemus, ed. Wesseling, p. 721.

in the account given by Joshua (x. 4) of his victories over the Canaanitish kings, the district "from Kadesh-Barnea even unto Gaza" evidently would include Arad, were not the king of that city mentioned distinctly (xii. 14) among the vanquished. And in the passages Josh. xv. 3 and Num. xxxiv. 4, Addar and Adar are but the same name with the letters transposed.[1]

Robinson discovered west of the southern extremity of the Dead Sea a hill bearing the name Tell Arad, which, though not displaying on its sides any ruins, yet seemed to him, from its general situation and distance from Hebron, to be the Arad alluded to in the passages already cited. And not only did the distance to Hebron confirm the conjecture which the similarity of the names gave rise to, but its relation to several localities in the neighbourhood did also, which Robinson identified. Among these were the ancient Moladah, now called el-Milh; Aroer, now Ararah; Tamar, now Kurnub; and the often mentioned Kadesh-Barnea, which Robinson supposes to have been the present Ain el Weibeh. All these places lay along the northern border of the ancient Edom, and at the southern approach to Canaan.

6. Thamara. This place, from the location assigned to it in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, was naturally suspected by Robinson to lie on the route which he took from Petra north-westward to Hebron. He identified it with the modern village of Kurnub. The only mention made of this place in Scripture is apparently in Ezek. xlvii. 19 and xlviii. 28, where the prophet is indicating the southern border of Palestine, "from Tamar even unto the waters of strife in Kadesh." The appearance of the ruins at Kurnub testify strikingly to the existence of a garrison city there formerly; and Eusebius and Jerome say of it, that this "Thamara" [the Greek spelling] is 'a fortified city held by a Roman force, and lying on the road from Hebron to Ælа. It is one day's journey southward from Malatha [Moladah].

7. Aroer. This place is mentioned only once in the Old Testament (1 Sam. xxx. 28), in the account of David's gifts to his allies after his great victory over the Amalekites, and the recovery of the spoils which they had taken at Ziklag. Among these allies were the people of Aroer. Reland showed[2] con-

[1] *Onomasticon*, *s.v.* Adar; Reland, *Pal. vet. s.v.* Adar and Arad.

[2] H. Relandus, *Pal. vet.* p. 436.

clusively that this place was not to be confounded with another Aroer lying east of the Jordan, on the frontier of Reuben and Gad. The place mentioned in Samuel would naturally be sought among the cities in whose neighbourhood David was at the time of his victory, and to whom he felt bound in honour to render some testimonial of gratitude. The place would naturally lie on the Hebron road. Robinson discovered a Wadi Ararah, and also a cluster of ruins bearing the same name, which, on account of the inherent probability, arising from the situation, as well as from the resemblance in the sound, he concluded marked the site of the ancient Aroer. From a hill lying south of these ruins, which were on the road to Gaza, he could discern the broad plain of Beersheba, towards the north-east el-Milh (Moladah), and farther in the same direction Tell Arad (Arad): beyond these he could discern the more lofty hills of Judah.

8. Moladah, the Greek Malatha. This old city belongs to the group of ancient places lying near each other, and on the ancient Hebron road. Most of them have no very great importance in themselves, and are only interesting for the light which they throw upon other localities of far more consequence. Moladah is always spoken of in the Old Testament in connection with other cities, more especially Beersheba, on the Edomite border (Josh. xv. 26; 1 Chron. iv. 28). Robinson, for grounds which seemed[1] satisfactory to himself, conjectures it to be the modern el-Milh.

9. Punon (Phœnus, Phœna, Phœno, Fenon), a station on the route of the children of Israel, north of Petra, and on the way to the land of the Moabites. For more definite hints as to its location, we must consult Num. xxxiii. 41: "And they departed from Mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah [situation unknown: von Raumer holds it to be the modern Maan]. And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon." Eusebius mentions the place under the name of Phœno, adding expressly that it was an encampment of the Israelites in the wilderness, and that it was once the residence of the princes of Edom. The name Dedan is sometimes found in close connection with it. The two occur together in Ezek. xxv. 13 and in Jer. xlix. 7, 8. Burckhardt supposed that Punon was identical

[1] Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, ii. 201.

with the modern Tafyle; but the results of later explorers have set aside that conjecture, from its want of intrinsic support, as well as from the great probability that the Tophel of Deut. i. 1 is to be found in the present Tafyle. The exact location of Punon has not yet been ascertained with certainty.

10. Thana or Thoana. Not improbably the modern Dhana, an unimportant place, of which little need be said.

11. Teman (Tema). This, according to Jerome, was a district in Gebalitis, receiving its name from Teman, a descendant of Esau. It is also used by Hebrew writers to indicate the south country, or the land of Edom. With this usage Eusebius concurs. It is in this general sense, too, that the prophets refer to Bozrah,—for example, Isa. xxxiv. 6, lxiii. 1; Jer. xlix. 22,—implying its connection with Teman. It is the same in the passage where Jeremiah asks (xlix. 7), "Is wisdom no more in Teman?" and in Amos i. 12: "But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah." That this Bozrah is not the Bozra of the Greeks and Romans, lying farther north, is distinctly stated by Jerome.

The exact location of Teman is not ascertained. Jerome tells us, that at his time there was a place bearing that name, five mill. from Petra, and held by a Roman garrison, and that it was once the residence of Eliphaz the Temanite king. Burckhardt conjectured that it was on the site of the modern Maan; but there is no etymological connection, as Robinson showed, between Teman and Maan; and besides, in Judg. x. 12 the inhabitants of the latter place are spoken of as Maonites. Von Raumer has supported the conjecture of Burckhardt, and cites the passage Isa. xxi. 13, 14 in confirmation. The Dedanim, or people of Dedan, referred to there, were descendants of Abraham's wife Keturah (Gen. xxv. 3). The verse, "The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty," is happily applied by von Raumer to the inhabitants of a station such as Teman was,—a place of supply for caravans; but it is plain, that in such passages as this, as well as in those found in Jer. xxv. 23 and Ezek. xxv. 13, not a city is referred to, but a whole district; and where Teman and Dedan are coupled together, it is to designate in general terms the people living on the border land between Arabia and Edom.

12. Eboda, Ebuda, Obeda, Abdeh, conjectured, with no degree of certainty, to be the Oboth of the Scriptures. This name appears only twice in the Bible: in Num. xxi. 10, 11, and xxxiii. 43, 44, where it is the designation of one of the encampments of the children of Israel. They were on their way into the promised land, when they were driven back by the king of Arad. Full of despair and complainings, caused by the venomous serpents, the death of Aaron, and the long-continued troubles and inconveniences to which they were subjected in the land of Edom, they bore away to the north of Mount Hor, passing Zalmonah, Punon, and Oboth, reaching at length the Abarim mountains on the Moabite frontier. More we cannot learn regarding this place from the Scriptures; and; as stated above, no one ventured to affirm decisively that it is to be traced in the later Roman Obeda or Ebuda.

Still greater obscurity rests over a place once of the greatest importance in connection with this history of Israel—Kadesh-Barnea. Further on I shall have occasion to speak of its probable situation more in detail; but here it may be remarked, that we have not the faintest trace yet existing of a knowledge of that place in Greek and Roman times. Its locality is to be sought with no help excepting that faint light which the Old Testament throws upon it. Not a vestige is to be found in the speech of the inhabitants of northern Arabia Petræa which hints at the existence of this once important place. That consecrating obscurity which rests over so many ancient places which have left no monumental record of their place, is often, as the reader must readily perceive, the source of our greatest difficulties in historical research, and stands obstinately in the way of our attaining perfect certainty.

The third and fourth roads mentioned in the *Tab. Peuting.* remain yet to be alluded to: the coast route at the west, from Gaza to Pelusium and Clysma, the boundary of Arabia Petræa on this side; and the southern route, extending from Clysma *via* Pharan to Ælа, crossing the Peninsula from east to west.

SEC. 3. THE COAST ROUTE ALONG THE BORDER OF ARABIA PETRÆA, FROM GAZA TO PELUSIUM,

ACCORDING TO THE ITINERARIUM ANTONINI AND THE ACCOUNT OF JOSEPHUS.

Gaza, which is mentioned in Gen. x. 19 in connection with Gerar, as a point on the southern frontier of Canaan, does not belong in strictness to Arabia Petræa, it being a true Mediterranean seaport. Yet, as the place where all the caravan routes running north-west across the Tih desert converge, its connection with the Peninsula has always been a very close one.

Josephus tells us that Idumæa, in his day, reached as far as Gaza, and that from that city ran a great Roman road to Pelusium, passing through the chief Mediterranean port of the Nabathæans [*i.e.* Rhinokorura, the modern el-Arish], and that from Pelusium it turned southward to Herodopolis, now Suez. This route is laid down very explicitly in the *Itinerar. Antonini*,[1] but in the *Tab. Peuting.* some of the names of stations and some of the distances are wanting. The itinerary of Titus (preserved by Josephus[2]), who passed over this route on his way from Pelusium to Jerusalem, agrees very fully with that of Antoninus. That of Titus has been recently followed, step by step, by the very competent editor of *Burckhardt's Travels*, Col. Leake,[3] whose authority is decisive regarding all points which come under his careful observation.

The *Itinerar. Antonini* comprises seven stations, and marks out the route for a journey of seven days. The entire distance is stated to be a hundred and thirty-six mille pass., or about a hundred and twenty-five English miles.

The stations are arranged in the following order:—

	Mill. Pass.
From Gaza to Raphia,	22
,, Raphia to Rhinokorura,	22
,, Rhinokorura to Ostracine,	26
,, Ostracine to Casium,	26
,, Casium to Pentashænus,	20
,, Pentashænus to Pelusium,	20

[1] *Itin. Antonini*, ed. Wesseling, pp. 151, 152.

[2] Fl. Josephus, *Opp.* ed. Haverc, T. ii.; *de Bello Jud.* lib. iv. c. xl. fol. 313.

[3] Burckhardt, *Trav. in Syria*, ed. Leake, preface, p. viii.

Gaza lay a little distance (seven stadia) from the sea; its harbour, Majumas, was at one time a port of great celebrity, but at last became unimportant.

Raphia, the first station southward, was reckoned the first Syrian city after passing the Egyptian border. The ancient name is still found in the modern Rafa. Col. Leake discovered a deep spring six hours south of Gaza, the remains of buildings, and two upright granite pillars. These seemed to him to indicate the location of the ancient city.

Between the present Rafa and the country subject to the inundations of the Nile, lie the modern el-Arish and Katieh. The whole district between the two places, excepting where drift sand has been blown freely in, is a plain impregnated with salt, ending in a lagoon, whose outlet into the sea bears the name of Lake Sirbonis, or Serbonis, as Hitzig claims. According to this eminent archæologist,[1] this lake was the ancient boundary between the Egyptians and the Philistines, and owes its name to a mythological character worshipped there, Serba (Çarva or Çarava, identical with the Indian Seiva), whose name is still to be traced in the word Serbal, and whose worship was the occasion for the former pilgrimages once made to that mountain.

The modern name Katieh, sometimes called el-Kas, and the distance of that place from the present Tireh, near Pelusium, leave no room for doubt that there is to be sought the location of the ancient Casium.

There has been some discussion whether the present el-Arish is to be identified with Rhinokorura or with Ostracine; but inasmuch as the latter is always mentioned as entirely destitute of water, while el-Arish is situated at the outlet of a large number of confluent wadis, down which in the winter months streams sometimes pour with great violence, it is not at all probable that it is the site of the ancient Ostracine. Where that place was, is now a matter of great doubt: the changes have been great in the structure of the whole shore in that neighbourhood, and data are lacking for its identification.

The well-watered el-Arish, which we are authorized to consider the site of the ancient Rhinokorura, was always the most important station between Gaza and Pelusium. The stream of water which there flowed into the sea, and which was the gift

[1] F. Hitzig, *Philistäer*, *in a. l.* p. 254.

of many wadis, is the "river of Egypt" referred to in Num. xxxiv. 5, which was to be the border line of the promised land in that city; and it is the stream which is mentioned in Isa. xxvii. 12 under the same name. This brook is called by Saadia the Wadi of el-Arish, and the Septuagint specifies it as *Ῥινοκορούρα*. Its mouth was, as Strabo tells us, a prominent trading place of the Nabathæans, and the Petra merchants sent their wares thither for the Mediterranean market. Wellsted took notice of the capabilities of the place in 1833, and remarked that, in case of any change in the political condition of Egypt, or of aggravated pestilence there, el-Arish would at once take an important place. The India steamboats would run to the head of the Ælanitic Gulf, and a transit across the country from Æla (Akabah) to el-Arish would be the immediate result. The distance across is a hundred and sixteen English miles.

The modern route from Pelusium to Gaza is not coincident with the ancient one, but lies a little farther southward.

Sec. 4. THE CROSS ROUTES THROUGH THE CENTRE OF THE PENINSULA.

THE HAJ OR PILGRIM ROUTE FROM AJERUD TO AKABA AILA, ACCORDING TO HAJI CHALFA AND J. THEVENOT, 1658; SHAW, 1721; R. POCOCKE, 1738; AND BURCKHARDT, 1816.

I have remarked elsewhere, tnat, according to Pliny's account, the direct route from the Gulf of Suez to Aila comprises a distance of a hundred and fifty mille passuum, or about sixty hours. From Aila to Gaza is about as far as from Aila to Suez; and the three places lie at the angles of a triangle which is nearly equilateral. The *Tabul. Peut.* assigns the distance from Clysma to Aila as a hundred and seventy mill. pass., or about sixty-eight hours, which agrees very closely with the data laid down by Pliny.

Before the twelfth century there is no statement that the direct Roman road across the Peninsula, mentioned in the *Tabul. Peut.*, was used by Mohammedan pilgrims, and yet it may have been employed for that purpose. Edrisi is the first who speaks of two roads running through the Sinai Peninsula: the one is the coast route from Colzum along the stormy Faran shore, where

Pharaoh is said to have perished, and thence to Mount Sinai, although its later course is not specified in detail; the second runs direct from Ajerud to Aila, and on it were the stations Routha, Kersa, Hafar, and Aila, regarding all of which, the last excepted, we know nothing. Abulfeda, in company with his cotemporary the Sultan Malec el Naser, took this route from Aila to Cairo when on his return to Mecca, but has given the name of no stations upon it.

It is only in 1658 that we receive from two sources, of almost the same date, more details regarding this route. One of these is the account of Haji Chalfa, the celebrated Turkish historian, which gives a detailed account of the stations of the Haj from Cairo to Medina and Mecca. The second source is the itinerary of Thevenot, a French traveller, who in the year 1658 journeyed from Suez to Sinai. He gives but seven stations, because he travelled much more rapidly than the great train of Haj pilgrims was wont to do. The names of other travellers who have examined this part of the Peninsula may be found at the head of this section. I shall discuss them in the order given there, beginning with the Turkish account of Haji Chalfa.

1. *The Haj Stations between Suez and Akaba Aila, as given in Hammer-Purgstall's translation from the Turkish.*

1. The first station (reached on the fifth day after leaving Cairo). The camp was pitched at Ruus el Newair, probably the Rus el Nawatyr of Burckhardt.

2. Thence the road led to Ojuni Musa, the Springs of Moses.

3. Thence to Moussarif, a place notable for the ditches said to have been dug in the effort to connect the Red Sea with the Mediterranean.

4. No name given.

5. Entrance into the wilderness of the children of Israel, et-Tih, a district which in the winter is immoderately cold, and in the summer destitute of water.

6. The middle point of the wilderness, a place which is called Randhol-Jimal, *i.e.* Camel's Garden.

7. Bathn-Nachl, *i.e.* the Valley of Palms, where a sultan of the Circassian Mamelukes once built a castle, in order to

defend the spring there against the incursions of the Beduins. The valley is also known as Wadi-tej-jerud, or the Valley of Retirement.

8. Wadiol Ghaime.

9. Wadiol Koreidh.

10. Ebjarolaala, the "Spring of the Highland."

11. Melala, in whose neighbourhood is a place called Aarakib-baghla.

12. Reesolrekjib, near to Jefarat.

13. Sathol-aakaba, the ancient Aila, whose ruins still exist.

2. *The Haj Stations, as given by Thevenot,* 1658, *the Journey being made in Six Days.*

First day to Navatir, seven and a half hours, and without water.

Second day to Rastagara, ten hours; road bad, and without water.

Third day to Kalaat el Nathal (correctly Nakhal), the palm grove where stood the castle mentioned in the preceding itinerary. This spot remains to the present day the chief refreshment place for all caravans passing through the desert et-Tih.

Fourth day to Abiar Alaina, fourteen hours; bitter water.

Fifth day to Sath el Akaba, five hours, and without water

Sixth day thence to Kalaat el Akaba, or Mountain Fortress, sixteen hours, and a very difficult road. The stations which lay along the shore of the Red Sea had good water.

If we compute the distances given in this faithful itinerary, we shall find that they are sixty-seven hours, surprisingly in agreement with the sixty-eight hours of the *Tab. Peutingeriana.*

3. *The Haj Stations, as given in Thomas Shaw's Account, written in* 1721.

This traveller consumed five days between Ajrud and Akaba, yet the whole distance as laid down by him coincides very closely with the aggregate mentioned by Thevenot, a sign that the route was the same, even though it may be difficult to recognise the same names of stations.

1. From Ajrud to Rasty Watter, twelve hours, and without water.

2. To Teah Wahad, a little over thirteen hours, and also without water.

3. To Callah Nahar, evidently Kalaat el Nakhal, the site of the castle, and the resting-place of caravans: there is good water; the distance from the last stopping-place about fourteen hours and a quarter.

4. From Nakhal to Ally, no water on the way, and the time consumed a little more than fifteen hours.

5. Thence to Callah Accaba (more correctly Kalaat el Akaba), about fourteen hours and a quarter.

4. *The Stations assigned by Richard Pococke in* 1738.

This writer overruns by nine hours the statement of the distance given in the *Tab. Peut.*, making it to be seventy-seven hours; but I cannot wholly pass over his account.

First day from Ajrud to Newhateer, ten hours, and without water. This place is evidently the Navatir of Thevenot.

Second day to Wahad Te (the Teah Wahad of Shaw), without water, and a little over fifteen hours.

Third day to Newhail, unquestionably Nakhl, over fifteen hours. Pococke differs from the others in stating that the water there is bad.

Fourth day to Allahaib, probably the Alaina of Thevenot and Shaw, a little over fifteen hours. Bad water.

Fifth day to Saat, probably Sathol Akaba, without water, and sixteen hours.

Sixth day to Akaba, about six hours and a quarter.

5. *Burckhardt's forced March in* 1816, *accomplished in Five Days.*

This author, who was so skilled in oriental matters, tells us that some of the older Arabian writers gave the names of other stations on this route than those which are now known. He gives the following, however, as those with which he became acquainted on his own journey:—

From Ajrud the first march was to a place called Rus el Nowatyr (compare this with the Rasty Watter of Shaw, the Ruus el Newair of the Turkish itinerary, and the Rastagara of Thevenot). It lies on a plain between mountains, and is destitute of water.

Second day to Wadi Tyh, at the entrance of the Tyh wilderness. This is evidently the Teah Wahad of Shaw, and the Wahad Te of Pococke.

Third day to Nakhl, where there was a rest of twenty-four hours.

Fourth day. A forced march brought him to Sath el Akaba, which is the summit of the western chain of Akaba. A little village designates the halting-place. The way is described as a very difficult one.

Fifth day. The whole night was spent in making the descent through the narrow passes. The next station, Akaba, on the Red Sea. It is much to be regretted, that although Burckhardt has given the orthography of the Arabic names correctly, and thereby made the accounts already cited more intelligible, he has omitted to give the distances. Robinson has not only given the names of the stations anew, but he has also done a good service in indicating the names of the tribes which are responsible for the safety of travellers who pass through their domains. Summed up in a word, the names of the stations are as follows, beginning at Suez: Ajerud; en-Nawatir, where is water; Jebel Hasan, without water; Nakhl; Wadi el Kureis; et-Themed; Ras en Nakb, without water; el-Akaba. From Ajrud the Towarah Arabs are responsible. They are compelled to escort caravans, but are not allowed to receive toll, they having forfeited that right some years ago, by plundering one which was passing through their territory. At Nakhl the Tiahah are responsible. Thence to Ras en Nakb the Haiwat Arabs are holden to secure the safety of travellers. All these tribes, excepting the one first mentioned, receive tribute from the Haj.

Notwithstanding the merit of some of the older atlases of the Peninsula, it was only after Ruppell had discovered, in 1822, the site of the ancient Ælа, that it was possible to construct the more recent and greatly improved maps, such as Laborde's of 1834, and Berghaus' of 1835. The publication of the note-book of this eminent naturalist throws much light upon this hitherto little known part of Arabia Petræa; and on account of its unique value, I must allude more fully to it before entering upon the description of other parts of the Peninsula.

II. RUPPELL'S JOURNEY ACROSS THE SINAI PENINSULA, FROM WEST TO EAST, ON THE ROUTE OF THE GREAT MECCA CARAVAN;

WITH HIS DISCOVERY OF THE NORTHERN END OF THE ÆLANITIC GULF, AND ITS CHARTOGRAPHIC SURVEY IN 1822.

Ruppell's scientific zeal led him to cross the wastes of Arabia Petræa no less than four times, in order to effect the thorough exploration of that land, so recently opened to travel.[1] His visits were in the years 1817, 1822, 1826–7, and 1831–35. The journey now to be described was made in April and May 1822. The account was first published in the scientific journals of von Zach and Verneur, but was afterwards incorporated in the voluminous work which he mainly devoted to the results of his Nubian explorations.

The occasion of his bold expedition in Arabia Petræa was the expressed wish of Mehemet Ali, that an accomplished mineralogist should examine the excavations of Wadi Nahasb or Nasseb, and to ascertain whether the mines there could still be profitably worked. The proposal was a liberal one: the German scholar was to be provided not only with an escort, but also with all instruments which he might need while making the examination; but he preferred to waive the offer, and to explore the Peninsula at his own cost, and with an escort of his own gathering. In this way alone he thought that the wilderness could be passed with security, and valuable results be gained for science. The results amply confirmed the soundness of his judgment. The journey was postponed till the 17th of April, on which day he took his departure, in company with two servants, two chiefs of the tribe of Hamaran, and four other Arabs, and with ten camels. At Suez he was joined by two

[1] Ruppell is one of the few men still surviving, who were permitted to partake in the earlier explorations of the Holy Land. On the occasion of a visit to Frankfort-on-the-Maine, to consult the City Library, while preparing this work for the press, I found Ruppell still living there at a green old age, enjoying the unbounded confidence of his fellow-townsmen, and largely influencing the scientific and educational institutions of the city. As a trustee of the valuable library already referred to, he spends a large portion of his time there, giving it the benefit of his ripe experience and vast learning.—ED.

sheikhs of the Soelhe tribe, and one of the Misene, together with a janizary.

Near Suez he noticed the conical heaps which designate the site of the ancient Colzum, and close by the sea some excavations, which looked as if they were originally intended to serve as places of burial. As the water now runs into them at high tide, which it was plain could not have been intended when the excavations were made, he concluded that in the course of time changes had been effected in the relation of the sea to the land, probably caused by the gradual sinking of the latter.

On the day of his departure the wind was from the south-east, which filled the air with vapour, and made the heat almost unendurable. The thermometer was 27½° R. in the shade, even on the sea-shore. The marshes were soon crossed which are adjacent to the head of the gulf; and the road continued then for half an hour along the bed of an ancient canal, which was once intended to connect the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. This bed was a hundred feet broad, and without the trace of an embankment. Turning eastward, the road then passed through a marshy tract, to which a sandy district succeeded, dotted with drifting dunes.

On the next day he passed through a dry wadi, known by the name Haji, which at the time of the heavy rains is sometimes so filled with the waters of the adjoining mountain country, that the channel running through it has a depth of seven feet. For three hours he followed the windings of this valley, and then entered the hilly country lying at the south-east. He spent the night in a basin-shaped valley called Kubab, where grew pasturage and some bushes, and where, with digging down for some feet, water is reached. Yet the Arabs do not get their supplies from wells, but from two cisterns cut out in the limestones, near one of which there stand the ruins of a Mohammedan chapel, and some fragments of other structures, whose form and object are now lost.

On the next day, the third after leaving Suez, Ruppell passed through the gorges of the limestone mountains, always pursuing an easterly direction; and after a six hours' march he reached the plain of Shemé, where he lost sight of all pasturage till he arrived at the green oasis of Nakhl. On the way thither he saw herds of goats under the care of wandering

Arabs, but they were at once driven out of sight and reach, he being taken for one of the predatory Egyptians who were sent into the wilderness to execute some wish of the pasha. The Arabs were generally armed with miserable flint-lock guns; but, so far as he could learn, they were almost destitute of ammunition.

The next day brought him to Nakhl. The district which he passed over was unredeemed wilderness; and instead of any living thing, the ground was strewed with masses of hornblende and quartz. Thirteen hours from the last encampment brought him to the castle of Nakhl. This fortress, which receives its name from the palms which once grew around it, although Ruppell did not discover any at the time of his visit, was built in the early part of the sixteenth century, by the Mameluke sultan Eshref Kansu. Ruppell describes it as a rectangle, surrounded by high walls, with six towers, and with a gateway on the east side, which is defended by a couple of cannon. It was garrisoned by an aga and about thirty Mogrebins. The deep well in the centre of the court, always supplied with excellent water, supplies, by means of a hydraulic wheel turned by two oxen, three cisterns of mosaic work which stand on the north-east side of the castle. On account of the accumulated filth of the place, the water, which is naturally of an excellent quality, had an unpleasant taste. Russegger, at the time of his visit at Nakhl, found the place to be 1396 feet above the level of the sea,—much below the general level of the great et-Tih plateau, which he found reached at one place the great elevation of 4322 Paris feet.

The next day he journeyed on, part of the time in an easterly, part of the time in a south-easterly direction, passing through the steep chalk hills of Madalne. He then entered the valley of Rawak, and at length reached the plain of Koros. Since leaving Suez his course up to this place had been identical with that of the great Mecca caravan, all the way through a dreary and monotonous district, dotted with chalk hills.

On the morning of the sixth day he left the direct pilgrims' route running eastward, and turned his face more to the south-east, coming back later, however, into the general road. The wearisome uniformity of the route was soon broken by the limestone hills, which at this point began to make the road a

difficult one for the camels. It is true the labours of the Mohammedans, anxious to facilitate the pilgrimages of their fellow-believers who should follow them in the Mecca pilgrimage, have done much to mitigate this, and open a road for the poor heavily-laden beasts; and in one place they have made a path two hundred feet in length. The name Debbe is given to this pass; and there may be seen there three Arab inscriptions, which give the names of the men who have so piously provided for the wants of the pilgrims who were to follow them. In the neighbourhood Ruppell discovered a small company of Arabs belonging to the Haiwat tribe: they had a bad name for committing robberies, but he experienced no harm at their hands.

After emerging from the pass, he entered a valley green with tarfa and nebek, and soon came to the plain of Darfureck, where the ground was entirely destitute of herbage.

For the first time after setting out on his march, he encountered on the next or seventh day large masses of granite. They were isolated, and were not numerously encountered. This place Ruppell designates as an elevated valley; for although it was hemmed in by hills, it was fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. The view, as he looked eastward, was exceedingly striking, and all the more after the dull monotony of the district through which he had for days been passing. In the distance he could discern the steep blue granite ridge beyond Akaba; at the right a strip of the green sea was in view; in the foreground lay the wild, dark rocky masses, here and there variegated by yellow chalk. At the left the broad Wadi Araba disclosed itself, through which a water-course could be seen making its way, dry at that time, but distinctly marked by the bushes which overhung it.

Ruppell required five hours to make the descent from the high plain to the sea-shore, in consequence of the number of windings in the path, as it pursued its way between the lofty masses of porphyry. In the most dangerous places the road has been widened to a breadth of about thirty feet. After reaching the bottom, it was necessary, before coming to the sea, to cross a considerable tract of marshes which surrounds the head of the gulf. This passed, he arrived at the site of a former settlement, marked by rubbish heaps. This place Ruppell conjectured to mark the spot where stood the Elath of the

Scriptures. The dry stream-bed of the Wadi Araba separates it from the ruins of a more modern town, which may be seen scattered under a grove of palms. Here are low walls, made of rough stones, cemented with mud. They serve the Hamaran Arabs as dwellings. Close by, on the east, lies the castle of Akaba, surrounded by a growth of date-palms.

In reaching this place, Ruppell accomplished what both Seetzen and Burckhardt set their hearts upon and repeatedly attempted, but were unable to accomplish. He had reached the northern end of the Ælanitic Gulf in advance of all European explorers, discovered the site of an interesting ancient city, and been able to complete the investigations which were necessary to make a correct map of that part of the Peninsula. Seetzen was obliged to turn back in 1807, in consequence of his want of money; and when that lack had been supplied, on renewing the effort to discover the site of the Ezion-geber of the Scriptures, the prince of the Wahabites in that region made it too insecure for a traveller. Burckhardt, who believed that Seetzen had succeeded in accomplishing his designs, made, notwithstanding, two efforts to go over the same ground, but both failed. In 1812 he was but two days' journey distant, in the neighbourhood of Petra; but the reports which reached him of the want of discipline among the Turkish troops at Akaba, compelled him to give up his plan to travel thither. Four years later he endeavoured to reach it from the west, and advanced from Sinai almost to the goal which he sought, but was obliged to turn back in consequence of the opposition of the Arabs. Six years later, Ruppell, crossing the Tih plateau, accomplished that which they failed to do, and has given us, besides, one of the best reports which we possess of the wild and inhospitable tract which he crossed. The itinerary, which Robinson cites in a note, of Lord Prudhoe's [the late Duke of Northumberland's] journey across the Tih desert, does not add much to what has been already given.

In addition to the valuable corrections which Ruppell gave to chartographers respecting the form and extent of the Gulf of Akaba, he added much to our geographical knowledge respecting Akaba itself, and the fortress which bears the name of the town. The castle is a square, having well-preserved walls and towers: it lies some hundreds of paces from

the sea, and was then garrisoned by forty soldiers, placed there by the Sultan of Egypt. A long half-hour's journey distant from the castle Ruppell discovered the ruins of another fortification, which was evidently of more ancient origin than that at Akaba: it was probably erected for the protection of the caravans on their way to Mecca. He was unable to examine the depth of the gulf, in consequence of the complete lack of boats, but ascertained that there was an abundance of fish as well as of coral.

The rubbish hills which he discovered near Akaba, and which he supposed to mark the site of the ancient Elath, were called by the Arabs Gelana. With the exception of a piece of quarried white marble, about three feet long, which had been exhumed a few years before in making a bath, no noteworthy object was seen by Ruppell. At the time when that piece of marble was brought to the light, however, some gold coins had been discovered, as he was informed.

III. L. BURCKHARDT'S JOURNEY ACROSS THE PENINSULA, NORTH OF THE HAJ ROUTE, FROM EAST TO WEST, IN 1812;

GIVING THE PROFILE OF THE COUNTRY FROM JEBEL SHERA THROUGH THE DEPRESSION OF THE GHOR OR ARABA, THE DESERT OF ET-TIH, AND THE GENTLE SLOPE TOWARDS THE GULF OF SUEZ.

The course which Burckhardt pursued in this his first journey across the Sinai Peninsula, may thus be briefly summed up. It was a course almost due west, and on the parallel of 30° N. lat., beginning about a day and a half's journey north of Aila, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Petra. The place where he turned from his projected journey farther south was Szadeke, in Wadi Gharundel. His course for the first half of the way was over territory where he was a pioneer. After traversing half of the distance, however, he reached Wadi Nakhl, which has been repeatedly referred to in the last chapter; after which time he passed over ground which had already been traversed, although Ruppell did not go over it till some ten years later. His narrative deserves all the more attention, from the fact that he was not only the first to discover and describe that great and interesting valley the Wadi Araba, or

Lower Ghor, which extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba, but also to ascend the mountain range which runs along its western side, and to traverse the northern part of the desert of et-Tih. He was the pioneer in that line of discovery which has since his time been so diligently followed by Letronne, Callier, Bertou, Robinson, and others.

Burckhardt's journey was made while he was enduring many discomforts, and while he was in the enjoyment of few of those advantages which most travellers consider essentially necessary, if they wish to reap scientific advantages from their journeyings. Yet, notwithstanding these limitations, he never lost sight of the objects of his journey; and his account gives a very satisfactory report of the geographical character of the district which he crossed. The journey consumed eight days, and was made in the hottest season of the year—between the 26th of August and the 2d of September. The preparations were soon made: indeed, it was impossible to live under the heat which was experienced in any but the simplest way. The Arabs, who walked five hours each day, sustained themselves with a pound and a half of black bread. Burckhardt fared slightly better, having butter, meal, and a preparation of sour milk, dried, which, mixed with water, afforded a refreshing beverage.

The greater part of the first day was spent in ascending Jebel Kula, which seemed to be the highest peak of the Shera range. Before reaching it, however, he passed over some low hills, and through some wadis, to which he has referred in detail, but which hardly present sufficient objects of interest to detain us here. It took more than eight hours of hard climbing to reach the summit of Jebel Kula, where he encamped for the night.

On the next day the caravan passed for an hour along the even summit of the mountain, before reaching the beginning of the descent. The way down was steep, narrow, and perilous. The whole western slope, which was composed of limestone and sandstone, was entirely destitute of vegetation. The path led them by a place where the Arabs of the Howeytat tribe, and of some others, were said to bury their dead. The course then for a considerable part of the way, till he reached Wadi Araba, was through a narrow defile of the rock, similar in character to

that at the Ghor, and merely thirty or forty feet wide. While traversing this part of the route, he passed some trees of the kinds common in the Peninsula, and some springs, which are much depended upon, although the water is not at all good. At the point where the narrow defile opens into the broad and remarkable Wadi Araba, is the site, according to Laborde, of the ancient port of Arindela. He, the French traveller, reports finding the traces of an ancient fortification; and certainly the place is one which would readily suggest itself as excellently adapted to protect the great commercial route which led to the once important city of Petra.

It was through this narrow defile, known as Wadi Gharundel, that Burckhardt entered Wadi Araba. This great valley he discovered to be quite destitute of water, since all the winter brooks which flow down towards it from Jebel Shera are absorbed before reaching it, and no springs are found in the wadi itself. The general direction of this great valley, at the spot where Burckhardt crossed it, is from N.N.E. to S.S.W. He says that it extends from Gharundel southward for a distance of fifteen or twenty hours, till it loses itself in the sand plain which separates the mountains of Hesma from the eastern arm of the Red Sea. At the place where Burckhardt crossed it, Wadi Araba resembles a broad sea of sand, whose surface is broken by countless wavy hillocks. The sand appeared to him to have been driven north from the shore of the Dead Sea; and the Arabs asserted that the valley continued to present the same appearance even north of Wadi Musa. Talh, or the gum acacia, tarfa or the tamarisk, adha and rethem trees, grew between the sand-hills: the depth of the sand prevented the growth of grass and shrubs, however. During the rainy season there is good pasturage, and many tribes of Arabs pitch their encampments there; yet even then the camels prefer to graze upon the leaves of the trees, rather than to eat the new growths of the season.

Among other things, Burckhardt learned of the existence of several places lying in the Shera region, south and south-west of Petra, which have not even yet been explored, and await the researches of some future traveller. The names, as he learned them from other Arabs, may be found in his work.

From the mouth of Wadi Gharundel Burckhardt pursued

his course directly across the Lower Ghor, the transit consuming an hour and a half. In some places the sand was very deep, and yet so firm that the camels walked without sinking. Not a trace of a road, or indeed of any work accomplished by human means, was to be seen. The heat was intolerable, being increased by a wind from the south-east.

After traversing the wadi, Burckhardt began at once to ascend the long range of mountains on the western side, which had not, however, more than half the elevation of those on the east. Many broad wadis run up into the range, and in them the gum acacia tree was seen growing. The soil is wholly silicious; and in one place Burckhardt discovered a piece of flint, oval in form, and three or four feet long, and one and a half broad. An hour and a half's climbing brought him to the summit. Passing over the range whose name is the Jebel Beyane, he descended to the plain on the west, which, although lying somewhat higher than Wadi Araba, is yet a thousand feet lower than the desert east of the mountains, through which runs the great Haj route coming down from the north. The vast expanse lay before the traveller in all its dreary solitude and desolation: only here and there was the monotony broken by slight hillocks of sand. More than an hour he passed on over this uninteresting plain, whose surface was strewn with black flints, and at length reached a depression about half an hour in length, where he encamped for the night.

Four hours' march the next day brought him to Wadi Lahyane, where he found traces of the road which once ran from Akaba to Gaza and Jerusalem. A little farther north, at a place called Berein, and which is conjectured to mark the site of the ancient Eboda, this road divides into the Gaza and the Hebron branches. Burckhardt learned that the distance from Akaba to Gaza is reckoned as an eight days' march: to Hebron it requires one day more. The soil of Wadi Lahyane was gravelly; and the place had been selected by a few Heywat Arabs, because their camels were fond of the tender branches of the acacia trees which grew there. These poor fellows had no tents; and their only protection against the sun and the dew at night was afforded by the thin acacia branches.

The next day's march brought him to a range of low mountains which separate the plain, which he had already

traversed, from the central desert known as et-Tih proper,—the scene, according to both the Jewish and Mohammedan traditions, of the protracted wanderings of the Israelites. This range is known as Jebel Rakab. Four hours sufficed to pass over it and to reach the spring of el-Themmed, whose water has a sulphurous taste. Notwithstanding its great value to travellers, it is not at all guarded from the carelessness of those who use it, not being walled in at all; the winds, too, blow the desert sand freely into it, and give it a cheerless aspect.

We have now followed him till we have reached the route mentioned in the preceding section; and here the routes of Burckhardt and Ruppell coincide. The next day brought him to Nakhl, which the reader will recall as the important station of the Haj pilgrims on their way from Egypt eastward. Burckhardt made no stay there, however, for it was feared that the aga residing there would take advantage of a longer halt to impress the camels of the little caravan which he accompanied, in order to use them to bring his provisions from Akaba.

As the remainder of the route from Nakhl to Suez contains nothing of special interest in addition to what has been communicated in the preceding section, I shall not dwell upon it further.

CHAPTER II.

SEC. 5. THE EASTERN COAST OF THE SINAI PENINSULA.

DISCURSION I.

THE SUCCESSIVE SURVEYS OF THE EASTERN COAST, AND OF THE SOUTHERN EXTREMITY OF THE PENINSULA—RAS ABU MOHAMMED AND THE TWO SHERMS.[1]

WE owe a great part of our knowledge of the coast of Arabia Petræa, to the repeated efforts which have been made by the English Admiralty in behalf of steam navigation on the Red Sea. The first result gained to science by these efforts was the publication of the maps constructed by Captain Moresby and Lieutenant Carless at the close of their survey in 1830–33. The publication of these authentic charts was necessary to supplement the accounts which had then been published of the internal configuration of the Peninsula; for only by a comparison of the two could we attain to a correct understanding of their mutual relations. And before I come to speak of the internal character of Arabia Petræa, and to discuss the physical character, first of the central Sinaitic granite group, and subsequently of all that surrounds it and is subordinate to it, it is necessary to dwell on the more general features of the coast. These, of course, have become known only gradually with the repeated explorations of the Red Sea.

The hydrography of this body of water has been utterly

[1] The reader may wonder at the introduction of the following analysis of the routes of Ruppell and Burckhardt, before the author has begun the description of the contour of the Peninsula and its general character. The reason is, however, that they are employed as a commentary on the detailed passages relating to the *Tabula Peutingeriana* and the older writers, which I have condensed within very brief limits, for the reason that the few students who are interested in these matters will prefer to consult the original authorities themselves.—ED.

neglected until within a quite recent period, because it has lain so remote from European commerce, and apparently so disconnected with the great avenues of trade. Not that it was not visited by scientific travellers, but the means were wanting to them of making a thorough survey. Niebuhr in 1763 prepared his map, and indicated the astronomical position of some of the most important points: he sailed along the whole eastern coast from Suez to Bab el Mandeb, but the western coast was utterly unknown to him from Kosseir to 21° N. lat. At that time English ships went as far as Jidde, but the shore northward as far as Suez was yet *terra incognita*; even the prominent Ras Mohammed, at the southern extremity of the Sinai Peninsula, was unknown to them. Even Niebuhr confined his labours to the western one of the two gulfs at the head of the Red Sea, having never entered that of Akaba; and in giving it a conjectural form in his map, he made it too short by half. Yet, imperfect as his chart was, it was engraved by the East India Company for the use of their ships, and was for a time their only authority. In 1772 the first voyage was made by an English ship from Calcutta to Suez; after which time despatches were regularly sent over this route, as they reached England a full month sooner than if sent round the Cape of Good Hope.

Nothing of importance was done to further an accurate knowledge of the Red Sea for about forty years, till, on the occasion of the French invasion of Egypt, an English man-of-war, under command of Sir Home Popham, examined the most important harbours, took astronomical observations with new and improved instruments, and collected the materials for a map, which was in some respects an advance upon that of Niebuhr.

In 1810, Lord Valentia published a map of the Red Sea, which was still an improvement upon the last-mentioned one; but it threw no light upon the Ælanitic Gulf, which figures upon it with the two great horns at the top, which the Turks asserted that it exhibited. Ras Mohammed, Tor, and some other places, were faithfully located; and the hydrographical character of the map is not to be denied. A number which followed dealt only with the southern part of the Red Sea, but the Gulf of Akaba remained unexplored; and Niebuhr longed in vain to ascertain the astronomical position of the town of

Akaba itself: he thought the solution of that question the most important unsolved question connected with the Peninsula. Seetzen was aware of the importance to geographers of exploring the eastern gulf, and of locating its head: he made repeated efforts to reach it; but the political disturbance produced by the Wahabite possession of the country was so great, that he could not advance within a nineteen hours' march of Akaba. There he had to turn: he was on the shore of the gulf, and by crossing to the other side he could see the goal which he sought, but reach it he could not.

It was while our geographical knowledge concerning the Peninsula was so deficient, that Ruppell made his first tour across the Tyh desert from Suez to Akaba, ascertaining its astronomical position, and examining the head waters of the gulf. But his work did not cease there. In the course of his prolonged stay in the Peninsula he crossed it many times, and in different directions; examining Sinai, Dahab, Sherm, Ras Mohammed, Tor, and all places of importance; and collecting so valuable a mass of authenticated materials, that he was able at length to draw up a map so exhaustive and so accurate, that Englishmen, whenever they had occasion to go over the ground which he had occupied, were compelled to say that they had little else to do than to confirm the accuracy of his statements and figures.

After Ruppell had completed his inquiries, which ended in 1826, there was still wanting a chart which would guide navigators away from the perils of the Red Sea, incurred in consequence of the coral reefs. The great force of the winds compelled vessels to approach the shore as closely as possible; yet, when they did so, they fell into the peril just mentioned, for there the reefs were pre-eminently to be found. At this juncture, the expedition alluded to in the opening words of this chapter was fitted out; and the "Palinurus," an English ship, under the command first of Moresby and subsequently of Wellsted, was despatched to the Red Sea for the purpose of making a hydrographical survey. This was accomplished in 1833; and the results, although published officially not long after, were first given to the general world in the maps constructed by Kiepert to accompany Robinson's *Biblical Researches.*

The triangular-shaped peninsula lying between the Gulfs of Suez and Akaba is generally called by the Egyptians Sicka el Hejas, the Way to Heja. It is a right-angled triangle, the sharp corner lying at Akaba, while the hypotheneuse is a line running from Suez to Ras Mohammed. This line extends from 27½° to 30° N. lat., or two and a half degrees, while that running from Akaba to the same point extends 27½° to 29° N. lat., over only two degrees. The third side, that extending from Akaba to Suez, is a trifle longer.

Ras Mohammed was found by Niebuhr to lie on the parallel 27° 54′ N. lat. In confirmation of the comparative accuracy of his early survey, it may be remarked that he was but 10′ out of the way, the English chart giving it 27° 44′. The Ras itself consists of a small level headland, which at its southern extremity descends suddenly to the sea in steep cliffs a hundred feet high; the whole is connected with the mainland by a narrow sandy isthmus. In the neighbourhood of Ras Mohammed the water has a depth of nine hundred feet. The Arab fishermen do not cast out their lines between the Ras and Moilah, as their sounding lines, which run six hundred feet down, do not reach the bottom, and no fish are met in that deep water. It is dangerous to sail in the immediate neighbourhood of the land, however, as the winds there are both strong and uncertain, and the sea is usually very rough. De Laborde has given a view of Ras Mohammed, and states in illustration of it, that the lofty mass of white limestone may be seen for a great distance towering conspicuously above the blue sea. On the east side of the headland is a small bight called Gosulani, which, from the depth of water, Ruppell thought would serve well as a harbour. The Arabs, however, do not consider it safe for their boats, on account of the violent north winds which frequently sweep down the gulf.

The coast from Ras Mohammed northwards, as far as to the place where the gulf narrows, is rocky, and of an extremely irregular contour, having in its middle part a deep bay, with two small bights leading from it, called Sherm Sheikh and Sherm el Moyah. The name Sherm is a generic one, and means a break or rift: it is applied to arms of the sea elsewhere, where the rocks are broken in such a way as to afford anchorage to vessels. One of these Sherms receives its name

from a spring of brackish water which is found there; the other from a sheikh who once died there, and whose memory is still venerated by the Arabs, who knew almost nothing about him, however.

The coast itself is covered with a confused mass of broken hills, which, where they come in contact with the sea, form small ridges, whose storm-dashed faces are steep and bare. Above the two Sherms the land rises gradually for several miles, nearing by successive steps or terraces the massive granite range which forms the back-bone, so to speak, of the Peninsula, and stretches away in the distance, a great, rugged, gigantic stack of mountains, with isolated peaks of red granite here and there conspicuously prominent.

The more southern one of these two Sherms is the least important. It is a little circular cove, open towards the south-east, having very deep water in the middle, and good anchorage near the shore, with protection against the north wind. The other Sherm is a place of much more importance. It, too, is a semicircular basin, and is protected against winds from every quarter. A channel a mile wide leads from the gulf into the harbour. On the north side lie the ruins of a structure marking the site of the spring which gives the place its name. Although the water is bitter, yet ships are often compelled to come hither to procure a supply. The place is much frequented by pilgrims who wish to cross the Peninsula, taking Mount Sinai on their route. The way is so direct, and the expense so light, that many avail themselves of the advantages thus offered, the expense being not much over five Spanish dollars for each person. There are always encampments of Mezeine and Aleygat Arabs around Sherm, waiting for opportunities to escort travellers, as they enjoy a monopoly of the privilege.

There are three distinct routes which have been taken from the Gulf of Akaba to the Convent at Sinai: they lead from Wadi Nabk or Sherm, from Minna Dahab, and from el-Nuweibi. The first was taken by Burckhardt, then by Laborde in 1828, and by Wellsted in 1833. The second was taken by Ruppell in 1826, and again by De Laborde on his way from Sinai to Akaba. The third is the one which is best known, having been opened by Seetzen in 1810; his successors over the same route were Burckhardt in 1816, Ruppell in 1822,

Callier and von Schubert in 1837, Robinson in 1838, and most recent travellers. It is the one most generally taken, from the fact that it is the natural communication between Mount Sinai and Akaba, Petra and Palestine.[1]

DISCURSION II.

THE THREE DIFFERENT ROUTES FROM THE GULF OF AKABA TO THE SINAI CONVENT, BY SHERM OR WADI NABK, DAHAB, AND NUWEIBI.

1. *The Ascent from Sherm and Wadi Nabk.*

Although Robinson, when he stood on Mount Sinai, and looked toward the south-east, discovered a long seam in the mountains, which the Arabs called Wadi Wara, and which evidently led in the direction of Sherm, and, as Robinson supposed, to Sherm, yet we have no traveller's testimony as yet testifying that that is the case. So far as we know, it is necessary to go along the shore for some distance towards Wadi Nabk, and then to turn north-westward through the mountains. This route has been taken by four different travellers: first by Burckhardt, whose narrative is executed in his masterly and exhaustive manner; and subsequently by Wellsted, Laborde, and Coutelle. Wellsted's march was hurriedly taken; and in his narrative he has not retained to any extent the names of the wadis through which he passed, or the notable mountains which he saw. Laborde is still more general, and is condensed into a few words, in which he speaks of discovering inscriptions on the way (which both Wellsted and Burckhardt failed to do, although they sought carefully for them), and alludes also to the grandeur and picturesqueness of the scenery through which he passed. Coutelle's narrative is useless for geographical purposes. Burckhardt's route and Wellsted's are apparently not identical, the former having followed Wadi Kyd, which lies north-east of Wadi Wara, and parallel to it, but much shorter. Wellsted's course was through the same gorge into which Robinson looked

[1] In addition to these routes, Baron Koller opened in 1840 a direct one from Mount Sinai to Akaba, the last third alone of which was new, the first two-thirds coinciding with those which lead circuitously by way of Nuweibi. A notice of this route (which has been taken by some travellers since it was opened by Koller) will be given further on.—ED.

from the summit of Sinai, and which he supposed would lead directly to Sherm. The distance was traversed by Burckhardt in four days, a longer time than would ordinarily be required; but he travelled slowly, partly to make careful observations, and partly because his camels were not in good condition. The Arabs prefer to take the route chosen by Wellsted, in consequence of the abundance of pasturage found on it; and yet Burckhardt speaks expressly of the unusual fertility which he encountered in Wady Kyd. Not only were the indigenous trees and shrubs of the desert found growing there, but dates, onions, and the variety of hemp which yields the intoxicating hasheesh. Wellsted was accompanied by a few sailors connected with his ship, the "Palinurus," which was then surveying the gulf: he accomplished the journey to the convent in a little less than three days.

2. *Dahab, Mersa Dahab, or Minna Dahab, and the Middle Route, from the Gulf of Akaba to the Sinai Convent.*

Dahab lies a day's journey north of Wadi Nabk. It was visited in 1810 by Seetzen, who, unable to advance as far as the head of the gulf, the object of his earnest longing, was obliged to turn to the south, and to pass around the southern extremity of the Peninsula to Tor. Burckhardt, too, was able to advance no farther than Dahab, and, like Seetzen, he was compelled to turn his face southward as far as to Sherm, whence he took the route across the mountains to Sinai, according to the route mentioned in the preceding pages. He found Dahab to be a mere fishing village, near which grew the finest collection of date trees which he had seen in the whole Peninsula. Some heaps of sand lying near the shore Burckhardt considered to be piles of rubbish, testifying to the existence of important edifices there. Not far from the place where the fishermen live, he discovered about a dozen other piles of earth, each about five feet in height, but apparently connected. The Arabs call them the Graves of the Nazarenes, *i.e.* Christians,—a generic term, which they apply to all who preceded Islam, and therefore often meaning little more than ancient. A more recent traveller[1] remarks, however, that the name has a more definite significance. The monks of Sinai have had, from time immemorial, a lien on the

[1] Carless in *Bombay Proceedings*, *l.c.* p. 46.

poor date trees growing at Dahab; and it is probable, thinks Carless, that some of the monks who may have been stationed there to harvest the crop, may have died and been buried there, giving the name Graves of the Nazarenes to the place of their sepulture. Burckhardt also saw evident traces of a paved road there, running southward towards the extremity of the Peninsula: large stones were seen, thrown from their old position indeed, but evidently having once had a consecutive arrangement.

All this led Burckhardt to a conclusion, not coincident with that which his predecessors, Montague, Clayton, and Shaw had held, that here was the site of the Ezion-geber of Scripture, but that here was that Dizahab mentioned in Deut. i. 1 as a place of importance. The "plain" alluded to in this memorable passage is undoubtedly the broad Wadi Araba; and the whole passage is a graphic summary of the course of the Israelites after entering on the Lower Ghor. Paran is a portion of the northern Tih desert; Tophel is the modern Tafyle, a fruitful and well-watered spot south of the Dead Sea, just before one comes to Mount Seir; Laban and Hazeroth are places referred to in Num. xxxiii. 17, 20, as camping-grounds of the Israelites on their way from Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea. Later observers do not confirm the probability of this conjecture, since there does not seem to be any reason for thinking that the Dizahab mentioned by Moses stood on the shore of the Red Sea. Nor do I place any importance on Laborde's conjecture,[1] that here is to be found the site of Midian, where Moses tended the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro. The grounds which he brings forward seem to me to be utterly insufficient to sustain the hypothesis which he brings forward, and all the more so, as the whole current of evidence runs in favour of the view that Midian lay on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Akaba.

In the year 1826 Ruppell went from Dahab across the mountains to the Sinai Convent, but the account which he has given is not sufficiently explicit to enable us to follow his steps. He discovered the rubbish piles alluded to by Burckhardt, but formed no theory regarding their historical significance. Wellsted, too, made a stay of several days with his ship "Palinurus" in the harbour of Dahab, which he regarded as a

1 L. de Laborde, *Commentaire geographique sur l'Exode et les Nombres*, Paris 1841, pp. 5–9.

good one, and of some prospective advantage, provided that the Gulf of Akaba should ever become a thoroughfare of commerce. The fancies of some earlier travellers, that gold was to be found there, Wellsted showed to have no more substantial basis than the idle theory of the Arabs, that because there were weeds of a golden hue growing in the water, there must be a hidden deposit of the precious metal not far away to impart to them their colour.

On the other hand, Wellsted was inclined to accept the probability of the hypothesis of the older travellers, that here was to be recognised the site of the city so famous in connection with Solomon's trading voyages to Ophir—Ezion-geber. Not only does the meaning of the name of the place Dahab, which signifies gold,[1] give some support to this theory, but the excellence of the harbour seemed to recommend it as the site of a commercial town. There is, too, a sharp coral reef running out from the place, bending around the harbour on the northern side, and bearing some resemblance to the object for which Ezion-geber is named—a human back-bone. Wellsted adds, that if this were not the site of the old trading city, the dangerous reef which projects into the sea may be easily conceived to have once been so dangerous to navigation, that upon it may have been wrecked the fleet which Jehoshaphat fitted out to send to Ophir. The account may be found in 1 Kings xxxii. 49; 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37; 1 Kings ix. 26–28.[2]

De Laborde's narrative of his journey from Sinai down the series of wadis leading to Minna Dahab is too brief and general to be of much service. His theory respecting the site of Midian has been noticed on a preceding page, and needs no further comment. The map which he has given of his route appears to be largely hypothetical, and too little trustworthy in minute details.

[1] Gesenius, notes to Burckhardt, ii. 848 and 1075.

[2] Ritter has elsewhere called attention to the evident weakness of this conjecture of Wellsted, stating that, in the first place, it is plain from the language of 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37, that the fleet went to pieces in the very harbour where it was built, and that, moreover, it was impossible for Ezion-geber to be so far to the south, or indeed anywhere but at the head of the gulf, from the fact that it was there that the children of Israel skirted the mountains of Edom, and entered upon the closing portion of their long march. See Num. xxi. 4, xxxiii. 35, 36.—ED.

3. *The Ascent from Nuweibi on the Red Sea to the Convent of Sinai by Two Routes: a Southern one by Wadi Sal and el-Hadhera, taken by Seetzen, Burckhardt, Robinson, and Schubert; and a Northern one by Wadi Zalakha, el-Ain, and Wadi Wetir, taken by Ruppell and Laborde.*

The most northern of these two routes coincides for the first half of the way, as far as el-Ain, with the direct route from Mount Sinai to Akaba. At el-Ain three branches diverge; one running northward to Hebron across the Tih desert, another to Akaba, and another bearing south-east to the sea-coast at Nuweibi. Both of the last two have been considered as unsafe for travellers till within a very recent period. As far as el-Ain it has long been unmolested; and it would seem that Ruppell and Laborde did wisely in taking their course along the shore of the gulf from Akaba to Nuweibi, and thence over a circuitous route to Mount Sinai.

(1.) *The Southern Route, as portrayed by Seetzen, Burckhardt, Robinson, and Schubert.*[1]

Burckhardt, after leaving the convent at Sinai, first passed the important spring of Abou Szoucyr (Robinson's Abou Suweirah), and ascended a hill country for half an hour. After a short descent, which terminates the district of Sinai proper, he continued over a wide open plain, which Seetzen considered to be the wilderness of Sinai. Here is the water-shed between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akaba. In an hour and a

[1] This route has its main interest in consequence of the connection which it has been conjectured to have with the journeyings of the children of Israel. I confess the arguments which have been adduced seem to me not worthy to be pressed to conclusions so positive as some have done; it is wiser to leave them, as Burckhardt and Robinson have done, as conjectural and possible, rather than as ascertained and proved. The whole field is too vaguely explored, and the language of the Bible too general, to be subjected to the same rules of criticism which are applied in Palestine. I have condensed into a few pages what the author has given in several, retaining in full, however, whatever relates to the Scriptures. Ritter condensed Seetzen's, Burckhardt's, Robinson's, and Schubert's accounts very slightly. But as Seetzen is very brief in his own diaries, it has seemed to me best to take Burckhardt's admirable and exhaustive narrative as a basis, and upon it to engraft whatever Seetzen, Robinson, and Schubert have given which may illustrate it.—ED.

half he entered a narrow valley called Wadi Sal [Stanley's Sayal], formed by the lower ridges of the primitive mountains. At the top the rock was granite; somewhat lower down, greenstone and porphyry began to appear. Farther still, the rock consists wholly of greenstone. The lower mountains of Sinai are much more regularly shaped than the upper ones: they are less rugged, have no insulated peaks, and their summits fall off into acute-curves.

The Wadi Sal or Sayal is extremely barren, although a few acacia trees grow in different places. The course was then downwards for seven hours, when Burckhardt issued from it into a small plain, which was soon crossed, and another valley similar to the former entered. Here granite was still seen, showing that he had not left the volcanic district. The descent was very rapid, and in two hours they reached the lower level, where calcareous and sandstone rocks begin. At the left, six or eight miles away, there was a long and straight chain of mountains, the continuation of the Tih range. In the direction which those mountains take, runs the direct road leading from the convent to Akaba.

The next day he continued his journey over the plain, which is called Haydar. It appears to follow the Tih range as far as its western extremity, and thus to form the northern sandy boundary of the lower Sinai chain. Not far from that spot Schubert felt sure that the first encampment of the Israelites after leaving Mount Sinai was made. Here the people began to sigh for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, and rebelled against their leader; and here it was that the quails were sent for their relief.

It is a singular fact that Schubert [and Stanley] saw the sky filled with innumerable birds at the very same spot. It has been conjectured that, in that strict connection which often is found between the natural and the supernatural, the judgment of God upon the Israelites may have been in strict accordance with universal laws, and the mortality among them traceable to general grounds. The people having for so long a time not tasted meat, may have shown such greed at the unexpected arrival of the quails, that, according to some authorities, their unrestrained appetite may have been the occasion of their death.

Burckhardt now descended into a valley of deep sand,

covered with blocks of chalk-rock. Soon he entered a narrow pass between low hills and sandstone, bearing traces of very violent torrents. Two hours later he left the valley, and crossed a rough, rocky plain, intersected on every side by beds and torrents. One of his guides went with his camels up a side valley to bring water from the well Hadhra (Robinson's Hadhera). Burckhardt conjectures this place to be the Hazeroth of Num. xxxiii. 17, where Miriam was afflicted with leprosy, and where the people tarried seven days (Num. xi. 35, xii. 14). Robinson remarks that the identity of the Arabic and Hebrew names is apparent, each containing the corresponding radical letters; and as Hazeroth was the third station of the Israelites after leaving Sinai, the distance of this spring from the convent—eighteen hours—accords well enough with the hypothesis. Robinson thinks that the determination of this point is of more importance in biblical history than would at first appear; for if this position be adopted for Hazeroth, it settles at once the question as to the whole route of the Israelites between Sinai and Kadesh. It shows that they must have followed the route now under discussion to the sea, and so along the coast to Akaba; and thence probably through the great Wadi el Araba to Kadesh. Indeed, such is the nature of the country, remarks Robinson, that having once arrived at this fountain, they could not well have varied their course, so as to have kept aloof from the sea, and continued along the high plateau of the western desert. If the Israelites did not encamp at this station, Hudhera, it not only sets aside the conjecture that it was the Hazeroth of the biblical narrative, but it makes it necessary to assign them another route. The choice is a limited one, however; for if they did not follow the route taken by Robinson and Burckhardt, they must have taken the more northern one of Ruppell, Laborde [and Stanley], leading by Wadi Zalakha and the large fountain el-Ain. This route leads to the west from Wadi Sal or Sayal.

Gesenius coincides with Burckhardt in his view that Hudhera was the ancient Hazeroth, although expressing his surprise that this name alone should have survived the extinction of all the ancient names in that locality. Yet this objection is delusive, for many old names are still retained in slightly changed forms; and Sina, Hor, Faroun, Feiran, Musa, Aila,

Asziun, Dahab, Madian, Hisma, Sin-Tafyle, Buszeira, Abid, el-Khulasa, Dhana, Gharundel, Arara, Bir es Seba, Phenus, and el-Ruhaibeh, are but modified forms of Sinai, Horeb, Pharaoh, Faran, Moses, Elath, Ezion-geber, Dizahab, Midian, Azmonah, Tophel, Bozra, Ebuda, Elusa, Thoana, Arindela, Aroer, Beersheba, Punon, and Rehoboth. And yet, despite all this, Laborde rejects the validity of the argument drawn from the perpetuity of ancient names, and stigmatizes this method of reasoning as *plus que légère.*

It may be mentioned that Schubert accepts the validity of Burckhardt's conjecture [while Stanley throws doubt upon it, on the ground that although there may be a resemblance between the Arabic and the Hebrew words, yet that the name Hazeroth, which means simply the enclosures, is not one likely to be attached to any permanent or natural feature of the desert. The same writer thinks, however, that this general region may have been the scene of the Israelites' route, not only from the abundance of the water yielded by the larger fountain el-Ain farther north, but because there are allusions to the sea in connection with their sojourn at Hazeroth and Kibroth Hattaavah: "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them, or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together to suffice them?" (Num. xi. 22.) "There went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea" (Num. xi. 31)].

Journeying on, Burckhardt passed through Wadi Rahab, a fine valley with many syal trees, and shortly after entered another valley broader than the former, where he again found an alternation of sandstone and granite. The barrenness of this district was greater than Burckhardt had ever witnessed, excepting some parts of the desert et-Tih. Not the smallest green leaf could be discovered; and the thorny mimosa, which retains its verdure in the tropical deserts of Nubia with very little supply of moisture, was here entirely withered. The descent was still gradual through Wadi Samghy (Robinson, Sumghy) and Wadi Bozeira. The mountains on both sides were of moderate height, and with gentle slopes. The latter portion of the course was through the bed of a torrent called Saada, in the windings of which he descended by a steeper slope than any of the former had been, reaching at length

a chain of high and perpendicular greenstone rocks, which hemmed in the valley so closely as to leave in several places a passage of only ten feet across. After proceeding a mile in this striking and majestic defile, he caught the first glimpse of the Gulf of Akaba. The valley then widens and descends to the beach, which is here several hundred paces in breadth. The greenstone and granite rocks reach all the way down. Some groves of date trees stand close by the shore, among which is a well of brackish but drinkable water: the place is called el-Noweyba.

In the neighbourhood of Wadi Sumghy, von Schubert heard his Arab guides apply the name Phara to the spot which they were passing. He lays no stress upon this fact, although I am inclined to believe that it merits more than a passing allusion. Here, as Robinson has shown, the Tih range reaches its southern termination, fading into a series of broken hills; and here, in a region where therefore there is a new physical character to be encountered, the name Phara appears as if not given to any specific spot, but as if applied to the whole plateau. Here I think we find the beginning of the ancient desert of Paran, which we know was contiguous to the wilderness of Sinai (Num. x. 12), and in which the Hebrews must have tarried a long while, for we read, "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran." We can admit, I think, that here was the southernmost limit of this desert, and that it extended away to the northward to the neighbourhood of the "wilderness of Zin," where the journey of the spies commenced (Num. xiii. 21, 26). The discovery of Hazeroth and Paran in el-Hudhera and Phara seems to me to throw much light upon the authenticity of the Mosaic record, and shows that, although so very ancient, yet that as an itinerary it is of great value.

(2.) *The Northern Route to Nuweibi.*

At the time of this present writing, only two travellers have published accounts of passing from the Red Sea at Nuweibi to Mount Sinai by the northernmost of these two circuitous routes—Ruppell and Laborde—both of whom pursued the charming valley of el-Ain.

At Nuweibi Ruppell entered a narrow gorge, which did not escape Robinson's scrutiny, as he passed by its mouth, and whose true value in draining the back country he at once recognised. The walls of this gorge rise to a height of several hundred feet (Stanley says a thousand), and the width is in some places not more than twenty-five feet. Although Ruppell gives no name in connection with it, yet it is plain that it can be no other than the Wadi Outir of Laborde and the Wetir of Robinson. The marks of water have been distinctly seen several feet from the ground, showing how strong and deep have been the streams of water which sometimes pour down through this gorge after the winter rains. Ruppell did not follow the normal direction of this wadi throughout its entire length, which, according to Robinson's map, runs N.W. for six hours, and then S.S.W. for four hours farther, but took a direct diagonal course towards el-Ain, where he was surprised by seeing a charming brook which loses itself in the sand. Ruppell's words are so well chosen, that I quote them from his own journal. He says: "We advanced from that point through an extremely beautiful valley. The luxuriant vegetation, nourished as it is by the water of the brook, covered the ground with a thick carpet; groups of trees of considerable size, alternately with low bushes, cast a pleasant shade in this romantic spot, whose charms are the more distinctly brought out by the contrast of the naked, steep masses of rock. Flocks of birds animated the scene, and filled the air with their song. Our arrival startled a company of ducks which had settled on the water, and storks and gazelles were also to be seen. Despite the charm of the spot, increased as it was by the solitude, not a trace of human life was to be seen." At the end of this valley Ruppell entered Wadi Salakha (Robinson's Zalakha), which runs south-west to the neighbourhood of the Convent of Sinai. The first part of this latter course seems to him to have once been wooded; the latter was exceeding sterile and desolate.[1]

Laborde gives an exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory

[1] Stanley pays an equally fine tribute with Ruppell to the extraordinary beauty of this pass. He does not add important facts to those added above, but his extraordinary power of depicting a landscape in a few expressive words, enables him to give a sketch as vivid as the most finished drawing. —See *Sin. and Pal.* pp. 80, 81, 83.—ED.

account of this route, although he affords some compensation in the sketch with which he illustrates his meagre narrative.

In March 1840 Baron Koller opened a new and direct route[1] from Sinai to Akaba. This had never been taken before, partly in consequence of the disturbed state of the country when most of the earlier travellers passed across. His narrative will be found to give, in a condensed form, the main features of the route, although two-thirds of the way was over ground taken by all the travellers who had gone to Akaba by way of Nuweibi. It was only when he had passed el-Ain and the entrance to Wadi Wetir that he reached new ground. The remainder of the route presented no features of striking interest; at any rate, no pass is mentioned which can vie with that spoken of by Ruppell, and the itinerary presents little more than a catalogue of minor wadis, hills, and patches of plain. Other travellers[2] have since him gone over the same route, but have given no detailed description.

DISCURSION III.

THE NORTHERN END OF THE ÆLANITIC GULF—JEZERIT FAROUN OR EL-MERATH—THE FORTRESS OF AKABA.

The northern extremity of the Ælanitic Gulf is historically noteworthy as the location of two places which are interesting to us in connection with three epochs. One of these is that of the middle ages and the Byzantine supremacy; another is that of the flourishing period of David and Solomon; and still another is that of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Palestine, at which time it is plain that Elath and Ezion-geber were in existence.

It is only owing to the researches of modern travellers, beginning with Ruppell in 1822, and followed by Schubert, Robinson, and Wellsted, that we have been able to glean any insight into the archæological character of Akaba. Seetzen and Burckhardt were both most anxious to reach it, but found it impossible without the certainty of death, and so were reluctantly

[1] Extract from Baron Koller's *Itinerary*, *l.c. in Geog. Jour. Ind.* vol. xii. pp. 76–79.

[2] Rev. H. Formby, M.A., *A Visit to the East*, Lond. 1843, pp. 247–250.

obliged to abandon the undertaking. The ancient travellers have not alluded fully to Akaba, but their meagre sentences show that it was a place of great celebrity, and that its position at the head of the waters of the Red Sea made it a coveted position. The place assumed its greatest importance at the time of Solomon, but it appears in Jewish history a hundred years later in connection with king Jehoshaphat, whose fleet was wrecked in the harbour of Ezion-geber (1 Kings xx. 49). After that time this place was overshadowed by its more successful rival, Elath. Uzziah restored this place to his nation, and rebuilt it, after it had been captured by the Edomites (2 Kings xiv. 22). This was 800 years before Christ. Some five years later, Rezin king of Syria brought the place under his power, the Jews were driven out, and Syrians took up their abode in it (2 Kings xvi. 6). Procopius tells us that in his day both Christians and Jews lived there side by side, and the same kindly relation continued to exist after the place passed under Mohammedan rule.

I have alluded in another place to Ruppell's statement, that he discovered, after making excavations at Akaba, a part of a Roman bath, and that he heard that Roman gold coins had been discovered there a few years before. I know no reason for doubting the authenticity of these discoveries. They seem to me to be sufficiently important to warrant future search.

The two objects of the greatest interest are the ruins on the island, and the fortress on the mainland.

The island bears the name Faroun or Pharaoh, and the ignorant Arabs of the neighbourhood have a tradition that here the Egyptian monarch perished. I have on a preceding page alluded to the possibility that this tradition may so far rest in fact, that there may have been an interchange of the name of Jehoshaphat and Pharaoh, and that the ancient story is the commemoration of the loss of that king's fleet on the rocks of Ezion-geber. We are indebted to the officers of the surveying ship "Palinurus" for the most of what we know regarding the ruins on this island, some of which are in a very perfect state, and date back to the twelfth century. They appear to have been the work of Saladin, although there is one building called by the Arabs ed-Deir, the convent, and supposed to be of Christian origin.

The island itself lies eight miles from the northern extremity of the gulf, and very near the western coast. It is about four hundred paces in length, and the axis runs parallel with the shore. The island is composed of two rounded hills, each about a hundred and fifty feet in height, connected by a low flat isthmus. The whole is surrounded by a massive wall, defended by square towers at the corners. The channel between the island and the shore is very narrow, and yet it affords the best and securest harbour north of Dahab, being shielded both from the northern and southern winds.

Around the top of the northern hill runs a distinct wall, enclosing a space three hundred and sixty feet in length, and ninety feet in breadth. Within the wall stand several square buildings, separated from each other by thick masonry. Through one of these Wellsted entered, and found an arched chamber, whose ceiling rested upon two arches, supported by a Doric column in the middle. This building is made of square hewn stones; all the rest were of rougher materials cemented with poor mortar. In the rubbish which lay around he found fragments of marble tablets, and pillars, belonging apparently to an older structure than any now existing. Carless, the companion of Wellsted, saw an inscription, but unfortunately neglected to copy it. The whole castle was in excellent preservation.

The southern hill is the scene of a mere mass of shapeless ruins. On no part of the island was there water, although on the northern hill the travellers observed a pair of great cisterns, hewn out of the solid rock, and evidently intended to hold rain-water. One of these was forty feet long and forty deep. A large fish-pool was also seen, it too being hewn out of the solid rock. The tongue of land connecting the two parts of the island is covered with heaps of loose sand, and displays no vegetation except a few withered shrubs. The walls are composed of granite, cemented with a mortar of clay and chalk, and despite the rudeness of the materials, they rise to a height of twenty to forty feet, and in some places have the outsides covered with stucco. The supports of the windows, doors, and gates were finished with bricks, which, coming in contrast with the dark colour elsewhere, presented a very attractive appearance.

The view down the gulf from the island is not so desolate as it is farther south; and instead of masses of bare, savage cliffs fronting on the sea, there are sandy and gravelly tongues running out, the most of them formed, it would seem, by the wash from the mouths of the wadis.

The fullest description of the castle on the mainland has been given by Robinson, although Ruppell and De Laborde have both given full accounts of it. Within there are several apartments for corn and stores; the roof is flat, and in the interior is a court where light palm-covered huts are put up for the accommodation of the garrison. That the fortress is as old as Abulfeda's time, and that it was used at that time to protect the Haj pilgrims, is fully known from the testimony of that writer. Although Burckhardt ascribes the construction of the new part of the castle to one of the Egyptian Ghorides of the sixteenth century, yet it does not seem certain that this was the true origin, and it is possible that the inscriptions to which Ruppell alludes would give some information on the subject. At all events, it was constructed, and it has been sustained, for the one simple object of caring for the safety of the Mecca pilgrims. In Ruppell's time it was garrisoned by forty men. Robinson found but thirty-three soldiers there,—an undisciplined set, consisting of Beduins from Upper Egypt, with a captain, an artillery officer, a commissary, and a governor who bore the title of Aga. Wellsted found a garrison of forty at Akaba, Mogrebins from the western Barbary States; yet he remarks that the security of the place depended far more upon the fear of Mohammed Ali than upon these troops. The walls of the castle, which are thirty feet in height, and lie four hundred and fifty feet from the beach, consist, according to Wellsted, of alternate layers of white and red stones,—a style of architecture very much admired in the earlier Arabic times. The neighbourhood is very fertile; the palm grove close by yields dates; and there is an abundance of vegetables raised, although no such gardens are to be seen as in Isstachri's times.

Robinson found a room in the castle which was tolerably free from the vermin which abounded almost everywhere, but von Schubert preferred to lodge outside in his own tent under the palm trees. The castle lies on the eastern side of Wadi el Araba, on a gravelly slope, which rises abruptly to the range of

mountains on the east. These mountains are much broken, but there seemed to be no watercourses. The water appeared to be absorbed by the ground before reaching the sea. Robinson found that he could succeed, as Laborde and Ruppell had done before him, in digging down through the gravel of the beach and finding fresh water; but in the castle there is a fine well, fifteen or twenty feet deep.

North-east of Akaba, and a day's journey away, Robinson discovered[1] a high mountain called el-Ashab, behind which lay a sand plain known as el-Hesmih. No one of his guides appears to have recognised this as the southernmost extremity of the Seir range; and in the contracted form of the word—Hesma—we may doubtless see the ancient Hashmonah or Azmon, mentioned in Num. xxxiii. 29 and xxxiv. 4, 5, one of the leading landmarks of the territory which the Israelites expected to possess.

Directly north of the fortress is Wadi Ithm, the narrow outlet of Wadi Araba, the pass through which the Israelites unquestionably had to pass[2] as they came down from the broad valley and skirted the mountains on the east, as told in Num. xxi. 4: "And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom;" and here it was, that, obliged to turn back so far from their direct path and make so long a circuit, "the soul of the people was much discouraged by the way." Here, too, it was that "the Lord sent fiery serpents[3] among the people; and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died."

[1] *Bib. Researches*, i. 174.

[2] In this conjecture Ritter appears to overlook the fact that in Num. xxxiii. there occur several stations between Hashmonah and Ezion-geber, viz. Moseroth, Bene-jaakan, Hor-hagidgad, Jotbathah, and Ebronah; and that besides this, which is hard to reconcile with the fact that the el-Hismah pointed out by Robinson is but a short distance north-east of Akaba, the argument drawn from Num. xxxiv. 4, 5, is not easily connected with the discovery of the locality of Hazar Addar in southern Judea.—ED.

[3] It will be remembered that it was not far from here that Burckhardt was told of the existence of venomous serpents even at the present day, and that he was told that in the Arabic version of the Pentateuch the expression "fiery serpents" is rendered "serpents with a fiery sting." He saw none of them, however. Robinson alludes to the existence of scorpions at Akaba.—ED.

CHAPTER III.

SEC. 7. ELATH AND EZION-GEBER ON THE ÆLANITIC GULF, AND THE ROUTE FOLLOWED BY HIRAM AND SOLOMON THENCE TO OPHIR.

DISCURSION I.

GENERAL VIEW—THE EARLIEST MARITIME COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST.

BEFORE leaving the eastern side of the Sinai Peninsula and the Ælanitic Gulf, and directing our attention to the western side and the Gulf of Suez, it will be well to consider, at what length may be needful, the great historical significance and effect of that body of water which penetrated so far into the heart of the ancient homes of civilisation, and to trace its commercial value. The changes which have been wrought in the lapse of time, which have caused the Ælanitic Gulf to be thrown very much into the shade, have well-nigh caused its former importance to be forgotten; and it is well for us that difficult historical problems at times arise, which make it needful for us to review the past, look into the physical conditions which determined its progress, and thus rescue many important facts from oblivion. And the interest which gathers around the Ælanitic Gulf depends largely upon the connection of that body of water with the voyages of Hiram and Solomon to Ophir, of which the Scriptures have given brief but pregnant hints. Very much learning and keen critical acumen have been directed, from the times of Josephus and the Fathers, Eusebius and Jerome, down to the present day, to solve the question, What country was meant by Ophir?—a question not answered indeed as yet with any degree of absolute certainty, but whose investigation has

cast much light upon the earliest recorded history of man, and has opened up to our knowledge many matters of great interest and moment. It is a question never to be answered, it may be assumed; and the most to be hoped is the attainment of a high degree of probability: for the further we recede from the present time, the scantier become our data and means of judging, and the more seductive and unreliable the fancies which arise to take the place of truth.

In this investigation we are compelled to acknowledge a complete lack of all classic authors; no Greek, no Roman writers have mentioned the name of Ophir. We are obliged to trust largely to the recent investigations of orientalists; but we have this advantage, that instead of taking the Hebrew language as our only guide, and the observations of Jews as our only record, the great progress made within our day in oriental scholarship opens a field far wider and richer, and more trustworthy. We are able to gain a view of matters whose interest was world-wide, not local; and we are allowed to rest upon facts definitely ascertained, and not to trust to the mere acumen of Hebraists. And among those whose labours have been of signal advantage to us, that of Gesenius must be prominently mentioned. His great efforts, aided by his large knowledge, have given him a mastery of the whole subject, which is conceded by those whose special investigations have given them a right to judge. And although later researches have to a certain degree superseded many of the results gained by him, yet his views may still be taken as the means of gaining a rudimental acquaintance with the subject. Nor can it be my purpose here to enter into this broad theme with any desire to exhaust it: all that I can attempt is to gather up those facts which throw light upon its geographical and commercial aspects; which, in a word, show the connection of India and the farthest Orient with the nations which composed what was the Occident of ancient times. It is a very true remark of one of the most instructive writers[1] on this theme, that there was no event in the whole reign of Solomon, the building of the temple excepted, of greater importance and of more extended results, than his fortunate efforts to extend his commerce to distant lands.

[1] Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. p. 76.

1. *A general Discussion of the Route to Ophir.*

Ophir is merely the name of the most ancient point known historically to us, on which hinge all our questions about the connection and the reciprocal relation of the East and the West in the infancy of the world. This point is one of great interest to us in connection with the story of Solomon and the fortunes of the children of Israel; but there is no reason to believe, that in a broader light its importance was greater than that of many places in antiquity, all traces of which have perished. And were it not for the sacred Scriptures, which have escaped the ravages of time, our knowledge of Ophir would have utterly perished; nor could we, who live in the Occident, even with all the helps which the ablest orientalists afford us, trace any relics of a land historically so interesting, without utterly losing our way in a labyrinth of fables and conjectures. For there has been no lack of speculation, even as it is, among the most sagacious and learned men, touching the real location of Ophir. It is only necessary to remind the reader that Calmet considers it to have been Armenia; Hardt, Phrygia; Olderman, Iberia;[1] Lipenius and Josephus[2] attribute the name to the Golden Chersonese; Relandus and Ouseley[3] think it to have been Ceylon; Macdonald[4] imagines that he finds its location in Sumatra; Dapper, Lopez, and Bruce, in Sofala and Mozambique; Montesquieu and D'Anville, on the eastern coast of Africa. Arias Montanus, Pfeffelius,[5] and others, have gone still further, looking for Ophir in Peru; while the great navigator Columbus[6] was convinced that he had discovered it in the West Indies, and wrote in a letter to his Government that "the

[1] Gesenius, *Ophir*, in Ersch and Gruber, *Allgemein. Encyclop. der Wissensch. u. K.* 3te Sec. Leips. 1833, quarto, O—Z, 4 Th. pp. 201–204.

[2] Fl. Josephi *Antiquitat. Jud.* lib. viii. c. 6, ed. Havercamp, T. i. f. 437; Martini Lipenii *Dissertatio de Navigatione Salomonis Ophiritica*, in Ugolini, *Thes.* vol. v. fol. cccxliii.–ccclxxxvii.

[3] H. Relandus, Dissert. iv., *de Ophir*, in *Dissertationum miscellaneorum*, Pars i. Trajecti ad Phœn. 1706, p. 186; Wm. Ouseley, *Trav.* Lond. 1819, vol. i. p. 47, etc.

[4] Macdonald in *Asiat. Researches*, T. i. No. 17.

[5] J. F. Pfeffelius, *Philologema historicum de termino navigationis Ophiricæ, institutæ a Salomone ejusque sociis navalibus Argentorati*, 1692.

[6] Al. von Humboldt, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die historische Entw. der geogr. Kenntnisse von der Neuen Welt.* 1836, vol. i. pp. 77, 317.

mountain of Sopora [a name for Ophir, given in the Septuagint as Sophora], which the ships of Solomon were three years in reaching, is in the island of Hayti, and has come with all its treasures into the possession of the king of Spain."

These speculations towered to the greatest height of their absurdity in the conjecture of Wegener,[1] who not only supposed Ophir to include the most distant shores of Asia and America, but the African and European islands as well, which must be passed on the voyage: "Navigationes Salomonis factas esse in Orientem et Occidentem, h. e. in Asiam et Americam, Africæ, Europæque occurrentibus insulis inter eundum ac redeundum non neglectis aut relictis." Such fancies as these can only be explained on the supposition that men do not take into account the great progress which time has brought, that they look at the past with the eyes of the present, and fancy that all that is done now was done in earlier days. They do not perceive the slow progress, the step-by-step advances which have been made from the time of rude beginnings up to the glorious achievements which dazzle them even while they write.

Ophir was the land which supplied the Hebrews with gold, and hence was often spoken of by them in terms of high praise, and in connection with the kingly deeds of Solomon. His subjects, in conjunction with the Phœnicians, with whom he was allied, used to sail from the Idumæan harbour of Elath and Ezion-geber (Ælath or Æloth and Essjongéber, according to Ewald), and make a three years' voyage in search of gold, precious stones, and sandal-wood. In another passage, where Ophir is not mentioned, but is undoubtedly alluded to, they are said to have been in quest of silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. But the most important object which they sought was gold,[2] and not gold simply, but a very fine kind of gold held in great repute, and often mentioned as the most precious of all. In Job xxii. 24 the name Ophir is even substituted in the place of gold, as the understood synonym of the finest kind. The gold of Uphaz, mentioned in Jer. x. 9, is the same unquestionably, the Hebrew letters having been transposed. More uncertain is the expression employed in 2 Chron. iii. 6, where, in speaking of the gold

[1] M. G. Wegeneri, Olsenatis Archdiacconi et Rectoris Neostadiensis, *Discursus de navigationibus Salomonæis*, Francof. ad Viadr. A. 1674.

[2] Gesenius in *Encyclop.*; Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Alther.* vol. iii. pp. 177, 178.

used in building Solomon's temple, we read: "And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty; and the gold was gold of Parvaim." In the fifth and eighth verses the "best" gold is referred to, and the word Parvaim seems to stand not for Ophir merely as a special locality, but as a general term indicating all the gold-producing countries of the East. The word seems to have some connection with the Sanscrit *pûrva, i.e.* eastern. Arias Montanus and Vatablus seriously (not in joke, as Scaliger supposed) conjectured that the name Peru and the Hebrew dual Parvaim had something in common,[1] and that the *two* lands of gold, Peru and Mexico, were meant; and this in spite of the statement made by Acosta,[2] that the name Peru is merely derived from the name of a small river imposed by the conquerors, and not at all recognised as the name of the country by the former possessors.

Gold, and fine gold too, was used largely for ornaments even in Moses' time, and is prominently mentioned in connection with the ark of the covenant and all the utensils of the altar. The mercy-seat was made of fine gold, the cherubim also, the candlesticks, lamp, and all the vessels (Ex. xxxvii.). Yet all this could have been procured in Egypt.[3] The name of Ophir does not occur in the whole Mosaic record. But it does appear in the book of Job, who was an Ishmaelitish prince, "a man of Uz," and who may have had commercial relations with Arabia (Gen. xxxvii. 25). And previous to the time of Solomon, we know that David consecrated three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir (1 Chron. xxix. 4) for the building of the temple of Jehovah. There must have been therefore some traffic between Palestine and Ophir prior to the advent of Solomon,—an important point, overlooked up to the time of Vincent,[4] but not necessarily implying, as Prideaux asserts, that

[1] Martin Lipenii *Dissert. Ophiritica, l.c.* ccclxxvii.; compare *Monumenta Pietatis et Literaria Virorum illustrium select. Commentar. in lib.* 3 *Regum*, c. ix. fol. 152.

[2] Jos. Acosta, S. J., *De natura novi orbis*, Colon. Agripp. 1596, lib. i. c. xiii. p. 32.

[3] Von Lengerke, *Kenaan, Volks- und Religionsgeschichte Israels*, Pt. i. p. 425.

[4] W. Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Lond. 1807, vol. ii. p. 265.

it does, that there were necessarily voyages made thither in king David's time.

The gold of Ophir, then, does not appear first in the Scriptures in connection with the splendid reign of Solomon, but is to be found in the books of Kings, in the Chronicles, in the Psalms (xlv. 10), in Job (xxviii. 16, xxii. 24), and in the prophets (Isa. xiii. 12): "I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." But it was the fleets of Solomon which brought this precious commodity to Palestine in any abundance, and made it a more common possession. The question is a natural one, whence that precious metal was brought, and whence, too, came the gold which Moses brought up out of Egypt to use for sacrificial purposes (Ex. iii. 22, xi. 2). The great amount of gold and silver which David had collected in view of the future temple is alluded to not only in the passage cited above, but also in 1 Chron. xxiii. 2, 14. But the great commercial importance of Ophir, the place whence all this mineral wealth was brought, appears very prominently for the first time during the peaceful and prosperous reign of Solomon, forty years in duration, from B.C. 1015 to 975.

DISCURSION II.

THE HISTORICAL DATA OF THE ROUTE TO OPHIR.

The passages of the books of Kings and Chronicles in which mention is made of Ophir are as follow:—

1. 1 Kings ix. 26–28: "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents [four hundred and fifty in the account given in 2 Chron. viii. 18], and brought it to king Solomon."

In the following chapter we have the account of the visit of the queen of Sheba (Saba, in the south of Arabia), who brought the king a present of a hundred and twenty talents of gold, besides spices and precious stones; so that, in the words of the

sacred narrative, "there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon." The gold which she brought is not spoken of as the gold of Ophir, and there was no need that it should be; for, according to the account of Agatharchides (*de Rubro Mari*, ed. Hudson, p. 60), an abundance of this metal was found in her own Arabia Felix. And even if she was compelled to go out of her own dominions to procure gold, she had immediate access to Ethiopia directly opposite,—a land always rich in gold, and with which she doubtless had close commercial relations. And the numerous passages of Scripture which speak of the gold of Sheba, *i.e.* Saba,—1 Kings x. 2, Ps. lxx. 15, Ezek. xxvii. 12, 22, for example,—neither imply nor disprove the existence of a gold-producing district in Arabia, nor a voyage thence to the land of Ophir.

2. The narrative given in 1 Kings x. 11 continues as follows: "And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees [that is, sandal-wood] and precious stones." We are then told for what object these presents were to be used, and then the return of the queen to her own country is mentioned. In ver. 14 we are informed that "the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold," not to speak of the sums gained in trade, and taken as duties from the Arabian sheikhs who came with their costly goods. And from ver. 16 to ver. 21 we have the list of targets and shields and other large objects which were made by the Jewish king out of pure gold. No silver was used, for in the reign of this splendid monarch silver was of little value: 2 Chron. ix. 20, "It was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon."

We then pass on in the narrative given in 1 Kings x. to what seems an entire change of scene, without a single word of explanation or preparation: 1 Kings x. 22, "For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

This language would be almost identical with that employed in 2 Chron. ix. 21, were it not for the fact that, instead of the expression "at sea," we have in the latter passage the words

"to Tarshish," indicating a very different goal. This difference has always been the source of much difficulty to commentators; and if we adhere to the literal reading, the sense is indeed very obscure. The only way to arrive at a clear understanding of what is meant, is by supposing that in the passage 2 Chron. ix. 21, "for the king's ships went to Tarshish," the words "to Tarshish" have crept into the later account of the chronicler, or have been wrongly copied by some still later transcriber. The latter is the view taken by the most recent commentator on these passages, the learned and gifted Ewald, in his *History of the Children of Israel*,[1] who has no hesitation in asserting that the author of the account given in the Chronicles was mistaken in his use of the phrase "to Tarshish." But I will not leave the subject, which is one of importance, without speaking more fully upon it.

The passage, as given in 2 Chron. ix. 21, is as follows: "For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." Here the word Ophir does not occur; and since the results of the expedition are precisely similar to those which were sought in Ophir, it has been thought by many that there were two different expeditions by sea,—the one to a place in the east known as Ophir, and one in the west called in the Hebrew account Tarshish, but more familiarly brought to our knowledge as Tartessus in Spain; and that both of these expeditions proceeded from the port of Ezion-geber, on the Ælanitic Gulf (now Akaba, on the gulf of the same name). They take the words the "ships of Tarshish" as literally indicating a fleet which sailed for that place. Others, on the contrary, have understood by that expression, not that they were vessels actually bound for Tarshish, but that they were in some way connected with that place, in a way which to a sailor's ear rather indicated the character and quality of the ships than the port for which they sailed; in one word, that the phrase "ships of Tarshish" was one familiar to mariners, but which was liable to be misunderstood by those who lived away from the sea, or to pass in time into such a degree of misuse that a copyist might easily fall into the mistake of supposing that it designated ships bound for Tarshish.

[1] H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, B. iii. 1 H. S. 76.

It must strike one as very singular at the outset, that if the expression "ships of Tarshish" or "a Tarshish fleet" literally indicates vessels which sailed for that place, it was an unaccountable pleonasm of the chronicler to mention in the same verse that those ships went to Tarshish; and it is no less incredible how he could pass over in utter silence the well-known voyage to Ophir. It is in the highest degree improbable that, at the very outset of the Hebrews' maritime efforts, they could make such amazing progress as to be able to fit out two such expeditions under the reign of a single king, as the supposed one whose limit was Tartessus, and that which proceeded to Ophir: for we know that not even the latter could be attempted without calling in the help of Hiram the king of Tyre. Yet not even this circumstance has intimidated those who have accepted the theory of the double expedition. They have even gone so far as to suppose that ships were carried overland from Ezion-geber to the Mediterranean, and then despatched for the Spanish Tartessus. Yet to consider this as the Hebrew Tarshish is not without its difficulties;[1] and the first appearance of the word in the Bible (Gen. x. 4), where we meet the form Tarshish Kittim, indicates, according to Paulus, the Archipelago. It has been asserted that the Phœnicians, whose skill as maritime adventurers and discoverers was known and undisputed, could readily have become the pilots to convoy an Israelitish fleet from Ezion-geber to Tarshish. But the complete silence of Jewish history on this point, the want of any allusion in the Hebrew records to the sending of a royal fleet to the extreme western limits of the Mediterranean Sea, compels me to regard this as an unsupported hypothesis. Is it at all probable that the enterprising Phœnicians and Carthaginians, who so jealously kept in their own hands the commerce of the Mediterranean, would have calmly suffered the Hebrews to interfere with their claims? Is it probable that the classic authors would not have a single line regarding the Jewish expeditions to Spain in quest of its wealth, and that Herodotus, who gave us the account of the discovery of that wealth by the Phœnicians in the time of Argathonius (i. 163), would not have alluded to this Hebrew interference? Could Solomon

[1] F. Chr. Schlosser, *Universalhistorische Uebersicht der Geschichte der Alten Zeit.* 1 Pt. pp. 229–233, Note *rr.*

possibly have harboured the thought of contending with the Phœnicians for the control of the Mediterranean?

Bochart,[1] who clearly saw the difficulties to be met in the Spanish hypothesis, proposed in its stead the supposition that there was a second Tarshish on the coast of the Indian Ocean, near to Ophir, perhaps the island of Ceylon, and that thence the ships which left Ezion-geber sailed. Hensler, who coincided with those who thought that there were two separate expeditions,—the one to Ophir, the other to Tarshish,—sought for the latter on the eastern coast of Africa. Bruce took the same ground, resting his supposition on his discovery of a place mentioned in the Abyssinian annals of Ambela Sior or Tarshish, whose situation was about four deg. S. lat., and not far from the modern Portuguese settlement of Melinde. This position Hensler, with greater learning than that of the Scotch traveller, has fully worked out, and laid down in his commentary.[2] Huetius and the distinguished Michaelis have adhered to the theory that Tarshish meant Tartessus in Spain; the former[3] resorting to the theory that the fleet left the Red Sea and was transported to the Mediterranean by means of the ancient canal across the Isthmus of Suez, the latter[4] establishing his position by supposing that the fleet circumnavigated Africa. The latter view is supported, or at any rate rendered not impossible, by the fact that Herodotus (iv. 42) tells us that this had been accomplished by the Phœnicians at the time of Pharaoh Necho. And two of the most recent critics who have written upon this subject, while casting aside the hypothesis that Africa was circumnavigated, have not hesitated to affirm that the Hebrew Tarshish was the Spanish Tartessus. But it is altogether improbable that a fleet was constructed on the Ælanitic Gulf, and thence transported over the Isthmus of Suez and through Egypt, then to enter the harbour of Joppa, the only one in Palestine, and thence to sail to Spain.

Another explanation is offered. The expression "a fleet of

1 S. Bocharti *Phaleg.* lib. iii. c. vii. col. 171, 18.

2 Hensler in *Bemerkungen üb. Stellen in den Psalmen*, § 348.

3 P. D. Huetius, *Comment. de Navigationibus Salomonis*, in Ugolini, *Thes.* vol. vii. p. ccxci.

4 J. D. Michaelis, *Spicilegium geographiæ Hebræorum exteræ post Bochartum*, P. i. p. 98, etc., in § Et Tharshish.

Tarshish" or "a ship of Tarshish" (rendered by the LXX. πλοῖν θαλάσσης) is said by some commentators[1] who are not satisfied with the Spanish hypothesis—O. Tychsen, Gosselin, Bredow, and Gesenius, for example—to be general in its character, and to indicate voyages of long duration (*de long cours*),[2] analogous to the modern expression East Indiamen, merely meaning ships of great excellence, not necessarily implying that the East Indies were specially denoted, but that the ships alluded to were first-class in their sailing qualities. All seafaring nations have adopted certain expressions of a similar character. And Ewald[3] very skilfully shows, in confirmation of such passages as Isa. ii. 16, Ps. xlviii. 4, that by "ships of Tarshish" were meant large and powerful vessels, and that the expression, and the one often occurring in kindred connections, "the ships of Hiram," are not to be taken literally, but to be interpreted under these conditions.

And inasmuch as the most important Mediterranean voyages of the Phœnicians were to Tarshish, to which place the Greeks subsequently gave the name Tartessus, it was very easy and very natural for the expression "ships of Tarshish" to creep into general use, to indicate those which were intended for long voyages, and therefore very readily applicable to those which were despatched from Ælа on the stormy Red Sea. And this is strengthened by the fact that only Phœnicians used the maritime language then in vogue: the Hebrews had no language of the sea; they must necessarily borrow all the terms which they needed to convey fine and remote meanings, from their enterprising commercial neighbours. The copyists of the Chronicles, writing at a later day, may readily be supposed to have been ignorant of the meaning of "ships of Tarshish," and the pleonastic gloss may easily have crept in by the easy substitution of the words "to Tarshish" in place of the simple

[1] S. Weston, *Dissertation on the Countries to which Solomon and Hiram sent their Fleets for foreign Merchandise*, in the *Classical Journal*, 1821, Sept. vol. xxiv. pp. 17-21; and C. F. Keil, *Biblisch-archäologische Untersuchung über die Hiram-Salomonische Schiffahrt nach Ophir und Tarsis*, in *den Dorpater Beiträgen zur Theolog. Wissensch.* Homburg 1833, vol. ii. p. 240. See also Keil's *Commentary on the Book of Kings* [Eng. ed. *sub loco*].

[2] S. Monk, *Palestine*, pp. 294, 295.

[3] H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. 1, p. 76, Note 1.

adjective form "of Tarshish." This view makes the whole meaning clear, and utterly does away with the necessity of supposing that there was that double expedition by sea which has recently been insisted upon so strenuously, and with much learning and acuteness, by the commentator Keil.

That it was not Tarshish, but Ophir, which supplied Solomon with articles of luxury, and that the Holy Scriptures speak of but a single terminus to his ships' voyages, is confirmed not only by the whole coherence of Jewish history with what has been advanced above, but also by such passages as 1 Kings xxii. 49, 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37; although it is but just to remark that these passages have been wrested from their natural meaning to support the theory that fleets were transported from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and used there as well as on expeditions to the East.

A hundred years elapsed after the subjugation of the Edomites by David and the death of Solomon, before any king of Judah went into Edom again, and claimed the possession of the Ælanitic Gulf. We have the event recorded in 1 Kings xxii. 48: "Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken [wrecked] at Ezion-geber." In the parallel passage in the Chronicles, we read that Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah "to make ships to go to Tarshish;" where, as in the phrase already considered, the expression "to Tarshish" seems to have crept in wrongly, owing to a misconception of the copyist, who appears to have considered it absurd that "ships of Tarshish" should have been needed to go to Ophir, and therefore ventured to change the reading and say "to go *to* Tarshish." How this view supports the theory of Keil, that there were two separate expeditions, it were not easy to understand, since it is evident that there was a wreck of the fleet which was to go to Ophir, and which the chronicler makes to go to Tarshish also. Is it at all probable that Jehoshaphat, during his reign of twenty-five years, twice in succession built fleets in the harbour of Ezion-geber to go to Tartessus, when he had the harbour of Joppa on his own shores, so much nearer, and the Mediterranean close by, so much safer to build upon than the stormy Red Sea? Joppa was the place whence Jonah sailed to Tarshish: why was it not available as a point of departure for Jehoshaphat? And

yet this is no puzzle to the apologist for the chronicler, who, in order to justify the severe language of Eliezer, makes the king of Judah construct one fleet at Ezion-geber to go to Tarshish, and when that had been wrecked, causes him to build another to sail to Ophir, which also suffered a similar destruction. The first, according to this view, perished by the judgment of God, because of the compact which Jehoshaphat had with Azariah the wicked king of Israel, and the second was destroyed after that compact had been annulled. The inconsistency in this is manifest: it seems improbable, as Reland[1] suggests (*nam quis sana mente præditus, quum ex Joppa solvera posset, e Sina Arabico classem mitteret Carthaginem? Sed hic error notus est, ut jam alii ante nos viderunt, quia naves Tarsis dicuntur missæ in Ophir, etc.*), that a fleet should be constructed in Ælа and transported thence to the Mediterranean; and it is just as incredible that the newly builded fleet should twice perish in the same way before leaving the harbour. Certainly the destruction of one Tarshish fleet, which was to sail to Ophir, would have prevented any attempt at constructing a second. The recognition of an error on the part of the chronicler or the copyist has certainly no reason to be confounded with a rationalistic interpretation of the passage, nor with an uncritical treatment of the subject, for genuine criticism must depend as much upon facts as upon words. The theory of the double expedition, one to Tarshish and the other to Ophir, is favoured neither by the history of the Holy Land, nor by the records which have come down to us of ancient maritime discovery: it is, moreover, by no means made necessary by the list of African articles of merchandise which Solomon imported,[2] and only rests upon a few words which are easily accounted for on the ground of a natural misunderstanding on the part of the copyist. And if it be thought over bold to make this charge, if we may not venture to accuse the copyist of a geographical error, we may simply accuse ourselves of ignorance, and re-assert, as Quatremère[3] has done, that he was perfectly justified in the use

[1] H. Relandus, *Dissertatio IV. de Ophir*, in *Dissertationum Miscellanearum*, Pars i. Trajecti ad Rhen. pp. 167, 168.

[2] Rosenmüller, *Handb. der bibl. Alterthumsk.* vol. iii. § iv. pp. 408–411.

[3] E. Quatremère, *Memoire sur le Pays d'Ophir*, in *Mém. de l'Institute Roy. de France, Acad. d'Inscrit. et Bell. Lettres*, T. xv. P. ii. pp. 377, 378.

of the words "to Tarshish;" for that word Tarshish is one of variable application, and its etymology is unknown to us. It is possible that it was a term applied to any remote region (*lieu éloigné*), and we have mention of a Tarshish in Cilicia, which was once the most distant point which the Phœnicians had reached in their tentative discoveries. Later the more distant Tunis received the same appellation; and still later the remote Tartessus of Spain, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, was known by the same designation. In the same sense, the distant Ophir could bear the same name at the time when the writer of the Chronicles made his records. That the use of the word is very ancient, appears from its mention in Gen. x. 4, where, as Rosenmüller remarks, Tarshish is conjoined with Elishah and the remote lands of the west. This does not imply, however, that the Spanish Tartessus was at all referred to; yet that place is meant in Isa. xxiii. 6, 10, and in Ezek. xxxviii. 13; and afterwards, at the time when Carthage rose to its commanding power, it was considered the utmost western place of importance (*Ταρσήιον*, Polyb. iii. 24, 2). Jehring[1] has endeavoured to show that India Orientalis was meant in the Chronicles by the word Tarshish. Yet despite this, the expression "ships of Tarshish" seems to imply, as Tuch[2] has recently shown, merely ships of large size, and adapted to distant expeditions; and the destruction of those ships at Ezion-geber appears to have been occasioned by the unskilfulness of the Hebrew sailors: for we have no account of the employment of Phœnician mariners during the reign of Jehoshaphat; but, on the contrary, we have, in his refusal of the assistance of Ahaziah (1 Kings xxii. 49) the king of Israel, who lived nearer the Phœnicians and was on friendly terms with them, an index of his want of such help as the trained Tyrian sailors would have been able to render him.

Some other minor discrepancies are easily explained: for instance, that between 1 Kings ix. 28, where it is said that Solomon received four hundred and twenty talents of gold from Ophir, and 2 Chron. viii. 18, where we find four hundred and

[1] Joach. Christ. Jehringii *Dissert. de regione Tarschisch*, in Ugolini, *Thesaur.* vol. vii. ccccxvi.–ccccxix.

[2] Tuch, *Recension*, in *Hall. Allgemein. Literatur. Zeit.* 1835, May No. p. 14.

fifty given as the amount. In this place both Keil and Ewald discover the source of the divergence in a very natural transposition of Hebrew letters. But when, again, we find in the account, 1 Kings ix. 27, "And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea," to Ezion-geber, and read in the Chronicles that Solomon himself had gone to Elath and Ezion-geber, and that (2 Chron. viii. 18) "Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea," Keil has not been able to find any explanation, excepting in the bringing of these ships over the Isthmus of Suez, and re-launching them at Ezion-geber; and he as well as Weston, whose dissertation on the subject I have already referred to, substantiate that position, by citing the instances mentioned by Plutarch (*Antoninus*, 70), of a couple of vessels transported across by Cleopatra, and by Macrizi, of the Sultan Saladin's similar undertaking in 1170.

But if, with Hugo Grotius, we take the ground, that the Phœnicians at that time were making use of the Persian Gulf for maritime purposes, and had extended their operations as far as to Tylos and Arad, their "Tarshish ships" could easily come thence to Ezion-geber. And this brings us at once to a suspicion that the reputed circumnavigation of Africa by the Phœnicians had some connection with this. But it is said, that in those passages where the word Tarshish occurs, the voyage was three years in duration, whereas that to Ophir was made within a year; and the assertion is propped up by the statement, that Solomon received in a year six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. It is said, that had it taken the Ophir fleet three years to make its voyage, the statement would have been, that the yearly receipt of gold from that district or country was only about a hundred and forty or a hundred and sixty talents. Whence then, asks Keil, could Solomon have accumulated those four or five hundred talents of gold, if it took three years to reach Ophir, since he had no gold in his kingdom? But does the passage in 1 Kings x. 14, "Now the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold," include the present of the queen of the Sabæans? And is it necessary to suppose that so princely an amount was received *every* year,—a sum which is computed to be equivalent to £3,000,000 sterling, and which would soon have

diminished the value of gold among the simple agricultural Hebrews? (for it is not supposed that the account of David's accumulated wealth recorded in 1 Kings xxii. 14 is to be taken otherwise than figuratively, as implying broadly and roughly the extent of his preparations to build their temple of Jehovah.) We know that Solomon received large sums from other sources, from his ministers, and from Hiram the king of Tyre (1 Kings ix. 14). But if he received every year such immense sums as six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, as those imagine who place Ophir in southern Arabia, and suppose it within the reach of an expedition absent but a single year, how happens it that so much stress is laid upon the exchange with Hiram of twenty cities of Galilee for the comparatively paltry sum of a hundred and twenty talents? That this was gold finely worked, as Michaelis conjectures, is by no means certain; and I have yet to see any reason for accepting the hypothesis.

DISCURSION III.

THE IDENTITY OF THE NAME OPHIR WITH OTHER SIMILAR OR EQUIVOCAL DESIGNATIONS OF PLACES IN ARABIA, AFRICA, AND INDIA.

Turning away from the longer discussion of a double route, it remains to us to consider the voyage to Ophir,—a voyage, however, which, simple as it looks, is not devoid of some difficulties.

The point of departure is not difficult to determine: all agree in setting it at Ezion-geber, a place whose location is well established, and which may have been either a district, or, as Ewald[1] conjectures, the port of Elath or Eloth, which was in its neighbourhood. But the place to which Solomon's expeditions were sent is more difficult to ascertain, and must lie open to more or less doubt.

Of course there was no possibility of learning the situation of a port on the Ælanitic Gulf, whose name, and all architectural traces of which, had vanished before the gulf itself was reopened to the scrutinizing investigations of our time. It is known, however, that the name, although in an abbreviated

[1] Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. p. 77.

form—Asziun or Assyun—was given to the locality at the head of the gulf by eastern authors as late as the tenth century; and Macrizi, who wrote in the fifteenth century, speaks of seeing or hearing a name like that applied to the region where is found the present city of Akaba. Bochart asserts that the etymology of the Hebrew word makes Ezion-geber mean a ledge of rocks; and Ewald sees in the name of the present Akaba, *i.e.* ridge or back, a form only orally changed and abbreviated from the ancient Hebraic and mythologic Essjon-geber, which signifies the giant's back. The ancient place of departure, the Ezion-geber of the Bible, was evidently not the Nobber di Sahab, the present Minna el Dahab, advantageously situated though it was as a place for building vessels, and suggestive as is the coral reef which lies before it, its name signifying a comb-like ridge,—that place lies too far to the south to conform to the scriptural allusions, and to justify the language of 1 Kings ix. 26, "Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth" (Ælа). We are thus driven to locate the often-mentioned Hebrew port at the northern extremity of the Ælanitic Gulf: even Nuweibi is too far south; and the immediate neighbourhood of Ælа, with the adjoining little island of el-Korey, satisfies all the conditions which we should expect, and displays good harbour privileges. At this spot is a place called Jezerit Faroun, which the Arabs still associate with the destruction of Pharaoh. It is possible that there may be in this singular fact some obscure hinting at the ancient fate of Jehoshaphat's fleet which perished there, and whose untimely fortunes may have been perpetuated in the traditions of the place. There are no ruins bearing traces of evident antiquity to be found there. Von Schubert thinks that there is no doubt that the little island opposite Akaba was the ancient Ezion-geber; and Robinson, who examined the neighbourhood carefully, in order to gather any historical traces of former possession, deemed it possible that Wadi el Ghudhyan, which runs from the Araba, may yet bear in its etymology some traces of the name of the old Hebrew port, since that word is spelled with the same letters in Arabic with which Ezion is spelled in Hebrew. The conjecture of Weston, that the name Akaba, *i.e. descensus*, has any relation to the landing of the Ophir fleets, and that this justifies his translating Kalaat el Akaba and Bahr el Akaba, "Castle

of descent," and "Sea of the descent," has nothing to support it, and is inadmissible.

But though there is not much opportunity for doubting where was the place of departure of the ships bound for Ophir, there is, by contrast, all the greater difficulty in determining the place of their destination. Gesenius, in bringing his masterly *Abhandlung von Ophir* to a close, tells us that he has by no means exhausted the subject, but has merely called attention to some of the more evident and outlying fields of our knowledge regarding that ancient commercial mart. And many other men of the most splendid scholarship have entered into special departments of the subject, and have subjected them to the most scrutinizing inquiry, bringing to their aid all that help from the study of oriental tongues which we are now able to command. The results attained are not uniform, however. Lassen[1] places Ophir in India; Quatremère[2] locates it at Sofala; and Keil, with the assent to a good degree of Gesenius, supposes it to have been Yemen. We are also indebted for much light bearing upon the subject in its general bearings, to the distinguished successor of De Sacy in the realm of Arabic scholarship, Professor Reinaud[3] of Paris, and to many other men of great eminence as orientalists, among whom I may mention A. W. von Schlegel,[4] Gildemeister,[5] Dulaurier,[6] Forbes Royle,[7] whose investigations into the historical literature of the countries on the Indian Ocean have contributed much light towards the

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, Bonn 1843, vol. i. 1 Hälf., pp. 537–539, 314, 315, 529, 530, 238, 106–108. See also the same, *zur Geschichte der Griechisch-Indoskythischen Königen*, Bonn 1838, p. 269.

[2] Et. Quatremère, *Mém. sur le Pays d'Ophir*, in *Mem. l.c.* xv. P. ii. pp. 349–402.

[3] Reinaud, *Relation des Voyages faits par les Arabes et Persans, dans l'Inde et à la Chine, dans le* IX. *Siecle, etc.*, Paris 1845, T. i. et ii. *Discours Preliminaire, etc., et texte Arab. avec traduction;* the same, *Fragments Arabes et Persans inédits relatifs à l'Inde*, Paris 1845.

[4] A. W. von Schlegel, *Indien in seinen Hauptbeziehungen, im Berl. Kalender* 1829, p. 11 et seq.

[5] J. Gildemeister, *Scriptorum Arabum de rebus Indices loci et opuscula inedita*, Fascic. I. Bonnæ 1838.

[6] Ed. Dulaurier, *Etudes sur l'ouvrage: Relat. des Voy. de M. Reinaud, etc.*, in *Journal Asiatiq.* IV. *serie*, Paris 1846, Août. Sept. pp. 131–221.

[7] J. F. Royle, *Essay on the Antiquity of Hindoo Medicine*, and *Lectures on Materia Medica, etc.*, Lond. 1837, pp. 126–148.

discovery of the object of our search, even if they have failed to bring it out into the open day.

Heeren's well-known inquiries[1] into the commerce of the ancients led him to the conviction that Ophir was not the designation of a single emporium, but rather that it designated rich countries in general, important ports on the coasts of Arabia Felix, Africa, and India; just in the same way that Thule indicated a remote north, as Cerne was the broad term used by the Carthaginians to indicate the east and the west, and as the Indies has been used in modern times as a general designation for those ports of the Orient which are far removed from European traffic. Zeune[2] has expanded the same conception somewhat, supposing that Tarshish was a word applied generally to a vague region at the west, Ophir to one at the east. This theory is grounded mainly upon the fact that the word Ophir is sometimes used by the ancients to designate countries which lie far apart, and in different directions; that some of those countries could not be reached in less than three years for the round trip; and that, according to Tychsen,[3] the word Ophir signifies in the Arabic "rich lands." This etymological character of the word is sustained by other orientalists, at least with this slight modification, that by some it is translated by the Latin *abundantia*. The Hebrew word rendered "full, rich," exactly corresponds to Ophir; and this fact is considered a weighty confirmation of the original Semitic derivation of the name, which occurs, it will be remembered, in Gen. x. as that of one of the sons of Joktan. Bredow,[4] sustained by Rosenmüller, has affirmed, in opposition to a general signification of the word Ophir, that were it so, it could hardly be applied in the geographical genealogy of Gen. x. to a great-great-grandson of Shem, but that it must have been, like Cush, applied to one nearer the parent stock: in other words, that although the names at the beginning of that chapter are applied primarily to geographical localities, those alluded to later are the proper

[1] Heeren, *Ideen über den Verkehr und Handel der Völker der Alten Welt.* 3d edit. Pt. i. Div. 1.

[2] A. Zeune, *im geographischen Verein, Maisitzung*, Berlin 1847.

[3] Th. Chr. Tychsen, *Commentat. de commerciis et navigationibus Hebræorum, etc.*, in *Götting. Comment.-Class. hist. phil.* xvi. p. 15.

[4] Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Arch.* Pt. iii. p. 180, Not. 88.

names of persons. But I do not think this objection entitled to great weight. Hartmann[1] draws the inference, that Ophir was one of those wandering names, like Tartessus, Cush, Taurus, and the like, and that it was first given to a port of southern Arabia; but when emigration began, and the inhabitants pushed their way farther on, and established colonies on the coasts of Africa and India, the name too was transplanted and multiplied, and many Ophirs were to be found. His theory furnishes a satisfactory solution of the fact, that, for whatever cause, many places bearing the same name are continually referred to in the ancient records, manifestly lying widely apart.

This last view, moreover, is that entertained by an early but very acute observer, whose large experience in travel enabled him to correct many errors into which his predecessors in the same field of research had fallen, and whose intimate knowledge of the New World led him to an analogy which in his mind proved very fruitful. Joseph Acosta[2] saw that the Hebrews may have used the word Ophir in just some way in which his fellow-countrymen the Spaniards used the word India. All distant lands, which seemed very unlike their own, they used to call the Indies; and all the people who lived at the ends of the earth they designated as Indians (*ita Indiam æque vocant nostri Hispani, et Americam et Mexicam, et sinas et Malaccam, et Brasiliam, regiones certo et situ et forma latissime dissidentes*). Yet Acosta is very far from falling into the error that Ophir was to be supposed to be America taken broadly, or Peru in a more restricted sense, as some of his predecessors supposed and maintained (*per metathesin vero Ophire sive Opire sit dictum Piru, etc.*); but he was strong in the conviction that it designated the rich East Indies. The opinion which was produced by the immense effect in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the discovery of America, that voyages were made in ancient times to the American continent, Reland[3] rightly disposed of with the weighty remark, that Solomon, wise and great as he was, would not have despatched ships bound for America from such an out-of-the-way port as Ezion-geber, but

[1] Hartmann in *Olaf Gerh. Tychsen*, ii. Pt. ii. p. 502.

[2] J. Acosta, Soc. Jes., *De natura Novi Orbis*, Colon. Agri. 1596, L. i. cxiv. p. 34.

[3] H. Relandus, *Dissert. de Ophir*, *l.c.* p. 167.

from Joppa, which was so much nearer to the goal sought. The similar sound which the names of many places in the East have to Ophir, has given occasion to the identification of many of them with the Ophir of Solomon,—a circumstance which will show the reader how difficult it often is to trace the etymology of eastern words, and to determine whether they are to be traced back to the times of Phœnician and Arabian colonization, or whether they have been the growth or the importation of more recent periods; or, again, whether they are names indigenous to the soil, which in time could propagate other words kindred to them, and send them forth to be grafted elsewhere, just as the Ophir of the Hebrews may be represented by Sophor in Arabia, Uphor in India, and Sofala in Eastern Africa.

There has been no lack of this kind of tentative effort, and of well-studied conjecture in this field, and it is unnecessary for me to allude to them all. It will be sufficient if I examine merely those which seem to rest on the best foundation, and to ascertain which of the theories regarding the location of Solomon's Ophir appears to best satisfy all the conditions of the question.

First in order, as the most ancient, and, according to the Shemitic etymology, the one which is most simple and natural, is that which is suggested by the genealogical record contained in Gen. x. 29, and which locates Ophir in southern Arabia, although hiding it, it may be said, in the name of a person, one of the twelve sons of Joktan. But notwithstanding Bredow's objection cited above, so many of the personal names in that list of patriarchs stand in a secondary sense as geographical appellations,—Mizraim, Canaan, and Asshur, for example,—that it is not unnatural to suppose that Ophir, the name primarily of one of the sons of Joktan, was afterwards applied to a locality.

As the district assigned to those twelve sons of Joktan is distinctly specified in the Bible (Gen. x. 30) as extending from Mesa or Mesha (Musa) to Sephar (the ancient Σαπφάρα, the more recent Dhafar, Dhofar near Mirbat in the Land of Incense, and the present Isfor), "a mount of the east," the lofty range now known as the Mountains of Incense, the term is perfectly intelligible to us at this day.

This region coincides remarkably with the district of Mahma,

east of Hadhramaut proper, and known from the earliest times as the Land of Incense. In it lay Dhophar (Zaphor, or Daffir, as Niebuhr heard the word pronounced), the ancient residence of the Himjarite kings at the time of their greatest splendour (*civitas eximia Taphra in Ammian. Marcell.* xxiii. 6, 47), and which from the earliest times stood in the closest commercial connection with the East, and merits a claim to the name of Ophir.

To this extensive traffic of South Arabia with Phœnicia, Ethiopia, and the Indies, which was a necessary consequence of the magnificent reigns of the Himjarite kings, of which some monumental traces remain up to the present time, the Sabæans could readily be indebted for their supplies of spices, stuffs, metals, and luxuries of all kinds, as well as for the works of art of which Agatharchides speaks (Agath. *De Rubro Mari*, ed. Huds. p. 64). This commerce, which, according to this Egyptian author, who wrote in the time of the Ptolemies, they shared with the Phœnicians, and which was in a great measure the source of the latter's wealth, may be conceived to have lasted down to the time of Solomon, and to have been the source of much advantage to him. Even during the reign of the Roman Augustus, the riches of this southern coast of Arabia enticed Ælius Gallus with his legions thither. The traffic in incense on the Sachalitic Gulf was of great importance even in the second century after Christ, according to Arrian; and Madusi, before the tenth century of our era, speaks in glowing terms of the royal residence and the port of Zafar on the Sindj Sea, enriched, as he tells us, by its trade with India. To this Gesenius adds his conviction that the ancient Ophir and this land of incense were the same; and supports his opinion by citing the existence of two gold-producing countries on both sides—Sheba (Gen. x. 28; Isa. lx. 6; Ezek. xxvii. 22; Ps. lxxii. 15), and Chavila, the Havilah of Gen. ii. 11. But it is not to be denied that an Indian Ophir can be connected with the district mentioned in Gen. x., by supposing a later emigration thither of the descendants of the sons of Joktan, just as Tarshish is said (ver. 5) to have passed into the hands of Greek colonists, and Babylon (ver. 10) to have been planted by the descendants of Cush. Yet there have been names of places in southern Arabia which approximate closely in appearance or in

sound to those which are found in the Mosaic record, and give much occasion for believing that Ophir was located in that region. Among the most weighty of these, Gesenius, and after him Tuch, considered the tradition not absolutely to be cast aside, which is found in the fragments of Eupolemos (in Eusebius, *Præpar.* ed. ix. 30), who speaks of an island rich in veins of gold, and called Urphe (*Οὐρφῆ*, or, as Gesenius thinks it should be written, *Οὐφρῆ* or *Οὐφήρ*), *i.e.* Ophir, lying in the Red Sea, whither David (does he not mean Solomon?) sent miners, who carried the gold to Judea (*ἦσον κειμένην ἐν τῇ Ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσσῃ*). The precise location of this island has not yet been definitely determined; but the Arabic translators have not hesitated to avail themselves so far of the light from this source, as to state their conviction that the Ophir of 1 Kings ix. 28 is to be looked for in the island of Dahlak. This island was an important intermediate link between the Arabian and the African coast from a very early day, and is used even now by persons interested in sustaining mercantile intercourse between Yemen, Aden, Mocha, and Abyssinia.

Its insular position in relation to the present Suakim, and to the celebrated port Aidab[1] (Aizab) of Madusi's time, and near to the emerald mines on the regular road between Berinike and Koptos, induced Bruce to take the ground—supported, as he believed, by the old African traditions—that there was the residence of the queen of Sheba and the capital of the kingdom of the Sabæans. He supposes that Balkis of the Himjarite monarchs was the queen who made a visit to Solomon, and conjectures that Maqueda of the Abyssinian annals was identical with Balkis. The insular position of this capital leads him to the hypothesis that the queen of Sheba who paid homage to the Hebrew monarch was mistress of a domain extending far to the south, along the Gold Coast of Africa, that it nearly reached Melinde, embraced places bearing the names of Mocha and Tarshish, and only terminated at Safala, opposite the shore of Madagascar.

But the orientalist Tychsen[2] has shown satisfactorily, that although these extensive commercial relations with the shore

[1] Abulfeda, *Geogr. Tabul.* xvi. in Büsching, *Histor. Magaz.* Pt. iv. p. 278.

[2] Th. Chr. Tychsen, b. J. Bruce, *Reisen*, vol. v. note to p. 329 et seq. See also Seetzen in *Mon. Corresp.* vol. xx. 1809, pp. 441–443.

of Africa existed in the early Moslem periods, as is proved by the statements of Cosmas Indicopleustes[1] in the sixth century, they have been placed by Bruce a thousand years too early, and have been treated by Bruce's predecessors in the same field of speculation, Dapper and Lopez, with even more fanciful lawlessness. But without entering into that matter now, it is enough to state that it is not only very improbable in itself that the domain of the Sabæans extended as far south as Safala and Madagascar, there being no historical data bearing upon the question, but that much of the weight which Bruce would give to his conjecture is lost by the fact, that his own personal researches never extended so far south as Safala.

Even the conjecture that there was a royal residence in Aidab or Aizab is open to a great deal of doubt, as Ludolf in his *Histor. Æthiop.* says nothing of any ruins there, the cisterns on the island of Dhalac excepted. And the theory of Bruce, drawn from the existence of walls reported to be standing near Safala, is not trustworthy; for although there be walls extending, according to Dos Santos, for two hundred miles into the interior of the gold country, and although unknown inscriptions are found upon them, and they bear the name Fura (which Bruce supposes to be Afura, and hence Solomon's Ophir), yet the gold diggings and the walls found there are much more naturally ascribed to later Arabians than to the men of the remote age of Solomon. We know from the accounts of Masudi and Edrisi that there was a traffic between the north and that country in the tenth century, gold being the object mainly in quest; and yet it may be said, in partial confirmation of Bruce's conjectures, that even much earlier than this comparatively recent period, expeditions may have been sent to the south for purposes of trade.

Mocquet and Dapper shared in the conjectures of Bruce, that the walls which were found in the neighbourhood of Safala were built by foreigners, and that they may not improbably be ascribed to the hands of Solomon's workmen. Lopez went further, and stated that the natives of Safala boast of having in their possession books of great antiquity, which confirm the three years' voyages thither of the Hebrew fleets, and make

[1] Cosmas Indic. in *Melchisedec*; Thevenot, *Rel. de divers voyages*, Paris 1696, vol. i. pp. 7, 23.

mention of their securing and carrying back gold. Seetzen refers to this, and thinks it not impossible that the Arabians, whom the Portuguese navigators found in a state of established colonies, might have had very remote ancestors who quarried gold there and sent it to Arabia Felix, whence it may have been procured by the fleets of Solomon without the necessity of their going farther southward. The inscriptions said to exist in the neighbourhood of Safala may in this case be Himjaritic in their character; and if so, renewed attention to them might perhaps lead to some discoveries of interest. That there was active communication between the Arabians and the once powerful people of the Axumitic kingdom on the opposite African coast, and that that traffic extended as far southward as the later Zanguebar, and embraced such articles of merchandise as cattle, iron, salt, grains and bars of gold, is made certain by the account, already referred to, of Cosmas Indicopleustes. And how active the efforts to establish commerce with those regions were, is shown incidentally by the strenuous exertions made by the Romans in the time of Constantine to send missionaries to the Axumites, as we learn from the narratives of Philostorgius, Photius, and others, who use the word India whenever they have occasion to designate the African gold regions controlled by the Homerites.

Seetzen identifies Oman and the Persian Gulf with Solomon's Ophir; but of the truth of this conjecture the probabilities are few, as all that supports it is comparatively modern. Heeren thinks, however, that the active commerce of more recent times carried on by the inhabitants of Oman points with sure finger back to the remoter period, when it may have had a more or less commanding influence on the traffic which Solomon conducted with Ophir. At all events, its bold coast made it the great centre for maritime intercourse between Zanguebar, Safala, Yemen, Persia, and India, which it continues in a certain measure to be even at the present day. It is the natural bond which connects all the countries in its neighbourhood, and it is possible that the *Moscha portus* of Arrian (*Peripl. mar. Erythr.* ed. Huds. p. 18) is, as Seetzen conjectures, the modern Muscat.

Seetzen speaks of another place, Szohar, now Sur, once a great emporium, and whose present name is precisely identical with that borne by the ancient Tyre. This circumstance leads him to

conjecture that the Phœnicians extended their colonization even into these southern seas; and he buttresses his position by citing a statement of Strabo's, that in his day the inhabitants of that portion of Arabia claimed to be of Phœnician origin. The names Sidodona and Tarshish, which he also heard, led his thoughts to Sidon, and to the Phœnician colony in Spain. Two days' journey into the interior from Szohar or Sur, he found an Ofir (spoken of by Edrisi as Ofra or Ofar): he discovered an Afir in el-Ahsa, a Hems near el-Katif (there was an Emesa on the Orontes), and a Mount Ofir in Bahrein. All this seemed to him to indicate former Phœnician settlements there, where was an excellent opportunity to extend commerce both to India and to eastern Africa. Seetzen does not conclude that Oman itself necessarily furnished Solomon with his gold, but that this commodity was procured from the African coast unknown to the Hebrews, who supposed it indigenous to that part of Arabia. Yet he does not reject the possibility that Solomon's gold was quarried there. Niebuhr had already hinted at the existence of a very wealthy district not far thence, and Seetzen's own explorations led him to believe that the lead mines of that region were rich in silver and gold. The pearls which are abundant on that part of the Arabian coast he considers to be the precious stones which were brought from Ophir, and cites the present use of the Arabic word Dsjanbar in support of his position.

Rosenmüller has, however, fully shown how deceptive these assumed etymologies are to all but the most learned philologists: for most of the words whose sound or manner of writing indicates or suggests an ancient name, are of comparatively modern origin.[1] To this I may add, that the identity of Ophir with any part of southern Arabia is disproved by the fact that it does not furnish all those articles which are distinctly mentioned as brought from Ophir. Seetzen, in the effort to disprove this, prematurely lost his life, and was never permitted to explore with any degree of thoroughness the country which was the Eldorado of his hopes. Yet he was not alone in his conjecture; for, on grounds similar in their general character to those which have already been alluded to, the opinion has been cherished by many, that Solomon's Ophir was in

[1] Rosenmüller, *Bibl. Arch.* iii. p. 177.

southern Arabia, among whom it is sufficient to mention the names of Bochart, Niebuhr, Büsching, Gosselin, W. Vincent, Heeren, Bredow, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, and more recently Tuch, Munk, Keil, and others.

Weighty reasons present themselves for selecting, as the location of Ophir, a place farther eastward than any thus far mentioned, namely India; and the cautious Gesenius[1] goes so far as to say, that between the claims for Arabia and those for India it is difficult to come to a decision, as, besides the peculiar productions of the Indian coast, there are valid reasons suggested by the names met there when subjected to the tests of the most eminent philologists. Nor is it hardly credible that, even in the very infancy of navigation, it should have required three years for an expedition to go to Yemen. This objection, however, has been parried in a number of ways. Keil[2] has no difficulty in disposing of it, for his theory makes Tarshish the object of a three years' voyage, while Ophir was visited within a single year. Seetzen, on the other hand, who considers Oman to be Ophir, remarks that if it be thought that three years were an unreasonably long time for making a journey to southern Arabia, it must be borne in mind how slowly the Arabian sailors even now have to creep from port to port, and that Tyrians, who were less acquainted with those stormy waters, could not venture to be bolder and more expeditious than the Arabs of our time; and that at every port it was necessary to tarry for a considerable period, and perhaps even to fish for pearls. Vincent[3] quotes in confirmation of the same opinion a passage in the *Odyssey* (xv. 454), where the Phœnician trading vessels are represented as tarrying for a long time in a single place:

> "Lingered they there for a full twelvemonth on the island,
> Many good wares in the ship's spacious belly concealing;"

and mentions that, in accordance with the rude arrangements of the times, the sailors must collect all the cargo, there being no shipping merchants who had all things ready for immediate transfer to the vessel's hold. Much time would of course be consumed by such delays; still the fact that three years were

[1] Gesenius, *Ophir*, p. 202.
[2] Keil in *Dorpat. Beitr.* vol. ii. p. 266.
[3] Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigat.* ii. p. 267.

spent on the expedition is a great argument that the place visited lay farther to the east. Bruce alleged, however, that it would have been dangerous to sail eastward, and that navigators could have made their way to India only with the aid of the monsoons. But Vincent has ingeniously turned the argument against him, and showed that there would have been far greater difficulty, during those primitive days of navigation, in a voyage to Safala on the African coast, than in one to Malabar. But Reland,[1] while showing that, in the absence of the mariner's compass, and under the necessity of sailing only on pleasant days and clear nights, it was impossible that Ophir could have lain beyond a wide sea, and so could hardly have been Sumatra, to say nothing of Peru or the Aurea Chersonesus; yet that it is equally improbable that it could have been as near at hand as Sephar in South Arabia, for the lust of both Hiram and Solomon for gold would not have suffered an expedition to go only so far, and delay two years, or a single year even, before bringing back a portion of the gains. On this ground he dismisses the conjecture that the leading harbour of the Himjarite kings of Arabia Felix was the Ophir of the Hebrew history. It is Reland's judgment, too, that it is even less to be sought on the African coast, in the neighbourhood of Safala, than in southern Arabia.

The earliest authority in favour of India as the ancient Ophir is the Septuagint, the translators of which have in every case, excepting in the genealogical record of Gen. x. 29, rendered the word, whether occurring in Job, in the books of Kings or of the Chronicles, by Σουφίρ, Σουφείρ, Σωφίρ, Σωφείρ, Σωφαρά, and Σωφηρά; and, according to the Coptic lexicographers,[2] Sophir is the general word[3] applied by the Copts to India and its islands. Yet Reland remarks that this name, which Heyschius cites as that of an Indian gold region, by no means dates back to the ancient Egyptian times, but was transferred by the comparatively modern Alexandrian trans-

[1] H. Relandus, *Dissert. IV. de Ophir*, in *Dissertationum Miscellaneorum*, Pars i. Trajecti ad Rhen. 1706, p. 168, etc.

[2] Athan. *Kircheri Lexic. Copt.* p. 210; Jablonsky et Champollion, *l'Egypte sous les Pharaons*, i. p. 68.

[3] J. D. Michaelis, *Spicelegium geographiæ Hebræorum extræ*, Gotting. P. ii. 1780; and *Ophir*, pp. 184-202.

lators of the Bible from the Coptic into the Greek. And Gesenius adds, that the Arabic translator has rendered the Greek word Σουφίρ, found in Isa. xiii. 11, by India, or rather by its equivalent el-Hend. Still more definite is the rendering given in the Arabian version of the historical books, where the word Ophir is represented as "Dahlak, which belongs to India."[1] By this is meant, it would seem, an island of that name lying between southern Arabia and India. But the accomplished Letronne,[2] whose voice is so weighty in all matters of oriental scholarship, expresses the conviction that in those times the name India, as used by geographers and ecclesiastical writers as ἐσωτέρα and ἐνδοτοτέρα, did not only imply ἡ εσχάτη Ἰνδία, *extrema* India, Taprobane, and the Deccan, but also an Indian interior, embracing even Arabia and the African coast of the Red Sea.

Such an island as that alluded to above could not have been one of the islands lying within the Bab el Mandeb, but must have lain outside of it. It is impossible to identify it with any other than the island Dioscurias, the present Din Zokatora, which may be the same, as Bohlen[3] has shown, with the Sanscrit Dinpa Sukhatara, *i.e.* the Happy Island, and possibly the νῆσοι ἐνδαίμονες mentioned by Diod. Sicul. iii. 47, which lie in the neighbourhood of the Sabæan country, and were often visited by Indian vessels. I find myself unable to agree with Reland that those islands derived their name from a Greek discoverer. I believe their name to be oriental, and adopted into the Greek at a later period; for long before the date of Arrian's *Periplus*, this island was visited not only by Greeks and Arabians, but also by Indians, for the purpose of procuring supplies of the best aloes and of tortoise-shell.

The identification of the Ophir of the books of Kings and the Chronicles with the Sophir of the Septuagint was followed by Josephus, who says expressly in his *Archæology*, that Solomon's expeditions had India as their goal, "formerly known as Sophira, but at present as Chryse" (*Antiq. Jud.* viii. 6, § 4, ed.

[1] Rödiger, *De origine et indole Arabicæ versionis*, in *Bibl. hist.* T. v. p. 32.

[2] Letronne, *Mem. sur une mission Arienne, etc.*, in *Mém. de l'Institut Acad. des Ins. et Bell. Lettr.* Paris, tom. x. pp. 220–245.

[3] Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, Königsb. 1830, Pt. ii. p. 139.

Havercamp, T. i. fol. 437 : *Σωφίραν, νῦν δὲ Χρυσῆν γῆν καλουμένην, τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἐστὶν αὐτή*). By this may have been meant the Chryse or Aurea Chersonesus of Ptolemy (vii. fol. 176), *i.e.* Farther India, or Malacca, according to Columbus' conjecture.

Josephus' statement was probably the occasion of the erudite Bochart's[1] hypothesis, that besides the Arabian Ophir, which he accepted as the main goal of the Hebrew expeditions, the ancients recognised another Ophir farther to the east. He held that Arabia Felix was too near for a three years' voyage; and he found difficulties in the fact, too, that there are no elephants in Arabia to yield the ivory which was a commodity that Ophir sent to Palestine. He conjectured that the island Taprobane was that portion of India at which the fleets of Solomon landed, but he based his conjecture upon utterly indefensible philological grounds.

The next marked advocate of the great distance eastward was Reland,[2] who believed that he found satisfactory traces of it in Ptolemy's emporium *Σουπάρα* (or Upara, according to some manuscripts) in Hither India. He located its position south-east of the mouth of the Indus, and south of the well-known Barygaza Gulf, and not far from Bombay. At the present Goa he found all the conditions of the problem solved, and confirmed his belief that there was the ancient Ophir by discovering the river *Γοάρις* (Ptol. vii. 2, fol. 168). Yet, though the latitude of Ptolemy's Supara coincides happily with that of the modern Goa, the sound of the words leads rather to the supposition that it was the present Sefer, or Seferdam. The latitude was only roughly determined by the length of the day, and the modern Goa does not display the slightest traces of a great antiquity. Lassen[3] has, with far more reason, conjectured that the Ptolemaic Supara was the modern Surat. But Reland insisted that at any rate the Supera which he believed to represent Solomon's Ophir was not to be looked for at a very great distance from the Red Sea, like the Aurea Chersonesus; that it could not have been a mere island, like Ceylon; that, again, it could not have

[1] S. Bocharti *Opp.* 1692, T. i. *Phaleg.* c. 28, fol. 141; c. 30, fol. 146; c. 45, fol. 691.

[2] H. Relandus, *Dissert. de Ophir*, in *Dissertat. miscell.* Pars i. p. 171.

[3] Chr. Lassen. *Indische Alterthumsk.* Bonn 1843, vol. i. 1 Hälf. p. 207.

been a widely extended district, but must have been a consolidated mercantile emporium, which was well understood to be the centre of an active commerce, and which could supply without great delay the wants of those who came thither to traffic. The time which Solomon required to reach such a port on the western coast of India, he thought would naturally be about three years,—one for the voyage from Elath thither, one for buying and stowing the merchandise, and one for the return to the port of Edom.

Reland was of the opinion that Josephus did not mean the Chryse Chersonesus, the present Malacca, by his *Χρυσικὴ γῆ*, but intended to discriminate between the latter in Hither India and the former in Farther India, which was too far away. This view finds a strong confirmation in the *Periplus* of the so-called Arrian, who represents the commerce of his epoch between the Red Sea and the west coast of India as very active, the great emporium sought at that time being Barygaza, where were collected all the precious commodities of the East; and the port second to this, and not far from it, being the one called by him *Οὔππαρα*, whose origin was not recent even then, but dated back to a remote antiquity (Arriani *Peripl. maris Erythr.* ed. Huds. p. 30). The *Periplus* alludes to monuments and Grecian coins which were ascribed to the times of Alexander, and which he thinks were of great historical importance. The Indian language, too, bears witness to very ancient commercial relations between the people of the west coast of India and the Javanas, *i.e.* western Asiatics, Arabians, and Persians: such words as *yavenesta* (tin), *yavona priva* (black pepper), *yavona* (incense), are a lasting testimonial of ancient traffic. Besides confirmation of this character, there are ancient traditions of an alliance between the Egyptian Sesostris and the Indian Bharatras. Ouseley, who holds that Ceylon was the object of the expeditions to Ophir, tries to sustain[1] his hypothesis by the discovery that the Persian poem of Garshap Ramah was founded on an Indian legend. The Persians and Arabians have no tradition of the expeditions of Solomon, yet some distinguished orientalists have believed that faint traces of such a tradition are still to be deciphered.

Taking all these circumstances, and others to be hereafter specified, into consideration, the probability seems great that

[1] W. Ouseley, *Trav.* Lond. 1819, vol. i. pp. 48–52.

commerce was established at a very remote period between the shores of the Red Sea and the Malabar coast. It is entirely different with the conjectures which have made the island of Sumatra,[1] with its lofty Ophir mountain, the object of Solomon's expeditions; for it is well known that the natives have no acquaintance with that name, imposed as it was by European navigators not merely on the gold mountain of Sumatra, but upon localities in the peninsula of Malacca.

The weak etymological grounds adduced by Bochart for believing that the ancient Ophir was the island Taprobane are easily disproved;[2] and very little evidence can be brought against Reland's conjecture, that it was identical with Upera or Uppara, which Michaelis thinks should be spelled with an initial S, making a word whose affinity to that Supora cannot be doubted which up to the time of Abulfeda[3] was designated as Safala, or as Safala Indica (Safala l'Hind), or according to Albirani, Sufarah, but which is not to be confounded with the Safala of the Zengi (Azzengi, *i.e.* the Zanguebar of the African coast). Yet Michaelis, who gives the name in its full form (following Edrisi in Jaubert, i. p. 57) as Sofalath al Dheheb, while believing that it signifies a gold coast (*litorale, litus auri*), insists that it can in no wise be identified, according to the orthography, with the Hebrew Ophir or Σωφείρ.

Gesenius remarks, in relation to the manner of spelling the name just alluded to, that the most correct form is that with the *r*, but that the Arabians pronounce it with the *l*, Safala, because in that way it more readily suggests to them its primitive meaning, "a low sea-coast."

Reland, in his effort to prove that his Uppara was not merely a mercantile centre, but that it included a certain extent of the Malabar shore, took the ground that the Coptic word Σοφιρ, for India, rather sprang from Uppara with the adding of the initial S, than that their chronological development was just the reverse; and in like manner he argues that Σωφιρ grew out of Ophir. Nor is he troubled by the fact that in the

[1] W. Marsden, *Hist. of Sumatra*, Lond. 1811, 3d ed. pp. 3, 11.

[2] J. D. Michaelis, *Spicilegium geographiæ Hebræorum extræ*, Pars ii. pp. 194–200; compare Gesenius, *Ophir*, p. 202, and v. Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, ii. p. 137.

[3] Abulfeda, *Tabul.* xiv., *India*, in Büsching's *Magazine*, Pt. iv. p. 272.

modern Goa, the former Uppara, on the Goaris, all the articles which are mentioned in the Scripture as brought from Ophir—gold, silver, ivory, apes, rare birds, and woods—are not now to be found in their ancient abundance. This, the eminent scholar now cited asserts, is no proof that in earlier times there may not have been an ample supply of all these objects of merchandise, which have diminished in amount there, as they have in Colchis and in Ceylon. It is manifest that Reland thinks that Uppara, the present Goa, was situated at a locality most favourable for collecting valuable articles from all quarters; and it may be, that at the flourishing epoch of the *Periplus* that coast may have witnessed no less striking scenes than those described by Abraham Peritsol,[1] who beheld the gathering together of from three to four hundred vessels laden with spices in some of the harbours on that coast.

The possibility of showing an agreement between the Hebrew Ophir and the coast of India was by no means exhausted by the discoveries and the arguments of the scholars whose opinions have thus far been cited. One of the most exact investigators into the ancient history of India, and the most profound student of her language, people, and antiquities,—the author of the *Pentapotamia Indica*, a work which opened a new era in the critical study of the geography and ethnography of the East,—has thrown a strong light upon Ophir, as upon many other cognate points, and, if not leading us to the towering heights of absolute certainty, has given us the next best gift of the highest probability. For, says Lassen,[2] if it can be shown that all the articles of merchandise which were brought to Solomon and Hiram from Ophir have Indian names when they are destitute of genuine Hebrew ones, it is unnecessary to consider afresh all the conjectures which have been raised before regarding the situation of Ophir.

It would be a valuable contribution to geographical knowledge, to not merely ascertain the exact locality of the ancient object of the Phœnician and Hebrew expeditions, but also to become familiar with the whole range of influence which a place so evidently remarkable must have exerted, to trace all

[1] A. Peritsol, *Itinera mundi*, ed. Th. Hyde, Oxon. 1691, p. 159.

[2] Chr. Lassen, *Indischer Alterthumskunde*, vol. i. 1 Hälf. Bonn 1843, p. 537. See Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. 1 H. See p. 177 et seq.

the various lines of mercantile adventure which must have converged at Ophir, to see what relation it sustained as an intermediate station between the East and the West, and to learn whether the Orient or the Occident contributed the most to its welfare and advancement. The following up such a clue as this would not only lead to our understanding the more obvious matters, such as the supply of gold, the building of temples, the course of trade in the East, but it would guide the thinkers of our times to a correcter appreciation of what is more recondite—the progress of thought, and the unfolding of civilisation there: it would thereby throw much light upon all branches of ancient knowledge, and contribute materially to our understanding the geography of the remotest times. For we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that we may find in such researches an instructive mirror of what is transpiring even now around us; nor can we fail to attain a clearer conception of the former development of human power and skill along the shores of the Indian Ocean,—a subject which no one who wishes to understand the evolution of the history of man on the globe can possibly wholly overlook. For this reason we cannot despise or afford to pass by the rich and ripened fruits which are found to grow upon this new field, and which have been brought to their present maturity by the masters of oriental letters—Gesenius, Lassen, Quatremère, and others.

That the articles of merchandise which were brought from Ophir to Palestine bore names of Indian origin, no one has proved so clearly as Lassen; and I shall be compelled to revert again to his weighty reasons for believing that the goal of Solomon's and Hiram's expeditions lay in India. Presupposing this for the present, however, it will be necessary in the outset to glance at the analogy of the Indian name for the land of gold with the Ophir of the Scriptures.

There must have been commercial relations with the Malabar coast in a period just as remote as that in which we find traces of Indian civilisation in Phœnicia. That cinnamon, the *kinnamone* of Herodotus (iii. 107, 111), was indigenous only to the islands east of Cape Comorin, and was early made a subject of traffic not only with the Arabians, but with the Phœnicians (under the name *kainamanis*, whence comes *cinnamon*), and through them with the Hebrews, we learn from Herodotus'

story of the wonderful birds which were brought in the dry rolls, τὰ κάρφεα, from a most remote country called Kerphat or Kirfah, a name which is even now used in Arabia to designate cinnamon. And we find allusions in the Song of Solomon (iv. 14) and in Proverbs (vii. 17), which show us that Ceylon must have contributed not only cinnamon to the luxurious state of king Solomon, but nard, myrrh, and aloes as well. The name *kinnamone*, which the Phœnician merchants who had a monopoly of the traffic brought with the spice itself from the far East, and which therefore could not be Arabian in its origin, was given to the Hebrews, and adopted with unchanged form into their language. The account which we have in Ex. xxx. 23 of the manner in which the holy oil for anointing was prepared, is a proof that five hundred years before Solomon's time cinnamon was known among the Hebrews, as well as the finest myrrh and other very costly spices of the East. The Israelites were surely very far removed at that early day from any familiarity with navigation. The Phœnicians were the most skilful sailors on the Mediterranean at the time of Homer, and according to all accounts they had effected settlements on the shores of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf before they established themselves at the base of Lebanon. On the Erythræan they were the primitive merchants and founders of colonies, and the names which they gave to the localities held by them extended even beyond the headland of Oman. And it is difficult to believe, that a people of such extent, enterprise, and power, did not make use at a very early period of the monsoon, and sail in their own ships to those countries in the East which were so rich in what they naturally would desire. Whose ships, if it were not the Phœnicians', would have been likely to have supplied the Israelites with the spices which they needed for the service of the tabernacle? It has been said,[1] indeed, that they might have been transported overland by way of Babylon, which stood in very close commercial relations with India. But in Isa. xliii. 14 we read: "Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships,"—words which indicate

[1] Keil, *Bibl. archæol. Unters.* in *Dorpat. Beitrag.* vol. ii. p. 288; Heeren, i. pp. 124, 210.

that the former supremacy which the Chaldeans had enjoyed upon the sea had passed out of their hands, and that Cyrus had made them a weak people.[1] And besides, the Phœnicians as well as Babylonians had their colonies and their fleets on the seas south of Asia: with them alone the Hebrews had commercial relations, never with Babylonians and Chaldeans, and only with the Nabathæans at a later period. The luxuries which the children of Israel enjoyed must have come to them over the sea.

If the Phœnicians were familiar with the route across the Persian Gulf to the mouth of the Indus (and we know from Nearchus' account of the building of Alexander's fleets, that Phœnician workmen and sailors were employed; see Arrian, *Exped. Alex.* vii. 19; Strabo, xvi. 741), they would meet these vessels from the Malabar coast, others from Ceylon, and, it is not impossible, some from distant China itself. In this way a line of communication would be formed which would allow the enterprising Phœnician merchants to carry back all the most valuable commodities of the East.

If that was the case, says Lassen, we ought to look for a name corresponding to the Hebrew Ophir on the western coast of India, but not so far southward as Goa (Reland's Supora or Upora), and more favourably situated as an ancient historical centre than the immediate neighbourhood of Goa would ever suffer it to become. The locality in question must be one where the products of southern and those of northern India (including gold) should come together, and where, out of the assembling of such varied articles of commerce, a great emporium would naturally arise, whence they could be shipped to the countries of the West.

In the opinion of Lassen,[2] the Abhîra of the Indians conforms exactly to all the necessary conditions of the case; its geographical position being no less favourable than the peculiarity of the word, which he asserts would sound when spoken by foreigners like the word Ophir. Besides, Abhîra is a name whose antiquity is known to be as great as the time of Solomon, whereas the Upora of Reland cannot be traced beyond Ptolemy and the *Periplus* of Arrian.

[1] E. Dulaurier, *Etudes*, *l.c.* in *Journ. Asiat.* 4th ser. T. viii. p. 131.

[2] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, p. 539.

The Indian writers as well as the Greek geographers assign the location of Abhîra to the neighbourhood of the mouths of the Indus; and this was the spot most readily attained by the Phœnicians, where the products of the north, gold and bdellium, and those of the south, such as sandal-wood, would naturally be collected for common exportation. Ptolemy (vii. 1, fol. 172) embraces the district on the north-west coast of India, between the present Bombay, Surat, Guzerat, Cutch, and the Indus delta, under the name Indo-Scythia; the south-easterly portion (Guzerat, with Surat and the Gulf of Cambay) he calls Syrastrene, *i.e.* Surast'ra of the Indians; north-west of that is the Indus delta Patalene, and beyond that is Abiria (not Sabiria according to Ptolemy),[1] the Ab'ira of Indian geography.[2] And in the *Periplus mar. Erythr.* ed. Huds. p. 24, neither Iberia nor Saberia should be the reading, but *Ἀβηρία*, whose level district Syurastrena and whose metropolis Minnagara are mentioned by the author of the *Periplus* as the locality where a great abundance of precious commodities were gathered, prior to their being sent to Barygaza, the great Indian emporium.

Even up to the present day a tribe of the Ahîr is found in that region. The word had originally the meaning cow-herd, and agrees well with the statement made by Arrian and Ptolemy, that the ancient Indo-Scythians were herdsmen. This Abhîra people, together with many other tribes of the same stock, originally settled in the northern Punjab,[3] but wandered southward as they gradually adopted peaceful habits, and settled on the sea-coast, leading a simple life. It was at a very remote period that the Indian Arians came from the mountainous north, and while still not mixed with the races of the Deccan, with whom they had no ties of blood alliance, yet entered into commercial relations with them, and assisted in establishing a traffic equally advantageous to both. They exchanged their primitive herdsman's life for the pursuits of agriculture, in which occupation we find the Afîr people

[1] Chr. Lassen, *zur Gesch. der griechisch. und indokythisch. Könige*, Bonn 1838, p. 269.

[2] Lassen, *De Pentapotamia Indica*, Bonn 1827, pp. 26, 27.

[3] Chr. Lassen, *Beiträge zur kunde des indischen Alterthums. aus dem Mahâbhârata*, in *Zeitschrift für die kunde des Morgenlandes*, Gotting. 1840, vol. iii. p. 197.

engaged now, whose language, it may be remarked, is a dialect of the Sanscrit, and not one of the South Indian tongues. They must trace their pedigree back, therefore, to the oldest Brahmanic races which sprang from the Indian Arian stock, and doubtless held possession of the coast at the time of Solomon. Their emigration to the delta of the Indus must have occurred between one and two thousand years before Christ.

But we are not obliged to close our ethnographical investigation here; more light yet is thrown upon the locality of the ancient Ophir by Lassen's discovery,[1] that a portion of the articles which were brought from that place to Palestine are given us in words whose origin can be traced to the languages spoken in the Deccan, while another part were evidently from the north of India, and are expressed by words of Sanscrit origin. It does not seem probable that the Phœnicians at that early period went so far in their enterprise as to transfer in their own ships the goods of the north and those of the Malabar coast to a central emporium; but it is altogether more likely that they sailed directly to some place where all the articles of which they were in quest were offered for sale; and Lassen believes, in view of this,[2] that a new support is given to his conjecture, that internal communication between the Indians of the south and those of the Deccan was opened more than a thousand years before the Christian era. He concludes that the Arian Indians had established settlements on the coast even prior to the time of Solomon.

According to this view, Ophir would not seem to be the wholly unknown region which it is generally supposed to be, since ancient Indian memorials of its character are not utterly wanting; and this may be the reason why, in the allusions made to it in the Old Testament, no detailed account of its locality is offered, and the reader is presumed to know, without a word of explanation, where Ophir was. And the conjecture is a very natural one, that at the time when the Phœnician commerce was the most extensive, the use of the name Ophir became very general, and perfectly intelligible, just as India and America

[1] Lassen, *Indisch. Alterthumsk.* i. *über Arische Indier*, pp. 391–418, and 531-540.

[2] Chr. Lassen, *Ind. Alterthums.* p. 539.

are to Europeans now; but that after the Phœnician power had departed, and its commerce utterly decayed, the Hebrews, though no longer able to receive gold and other precious goods from Ophir, had no more occasion to use the word, and the name, which in Job, in the Pentateuch, in the Kings, and in the Prophets was familiar, passed into desuetude. And this, it may be remarked, is an incidental argument that Ophir was not in Arabia; for, despite the overthrow of the Phœnician power, and with the decadence of that formidable nation, the loss of means of communication with distant marts, Arabia was more and more accessible, and all its products were more and more readily thrown than they had ever been into the Hebrew market.

There are people dwelling in the neighbourhood of Guzerat who speak a language of Sanscrit origin, as do the present Ahîr: their ancient name was Lat'ika (Huian Thsang gives it Lat'a or Lo), whence comes Ptolemy's *Λαρική*, connected with the rivers Mahi and Narmada (Mhye and Nerbudda), and the city *Βαρύγαζα* (Baroach).

Instead of *'Αραβικῆς* or *'Αριακῆς*, we should read, according to Lassen's emendation, *Λαρικῆς* in *Peripl. mar. Erythr.* ed. Huds. p. 24; and the Barygaza of the same work is given in the following forms: in the *Periplus*, p. 24, *ἡ Βαρύγαζα* and *τὰ Βαρύγαζα*; in Strabo xvi. *Βαργόση*; in Huian Thsang Palonkotschan-pho, *i.e.* the Indian Varikak'-habhû, or the Marsh—very characteristic; in Sanscrit, Bhrigukak'ha, *i.e.* Coastland of Bhrigu. This place was the great emporium of Indian commerce at the time of the *Periplus*, where all valuable commodities were brought together from the north and from the south, and were afterwards transferred to the west. Land caravans seem, too, to have come thither from distant places, and to have contributed to the accumulation of valuables, according to a passage in the *Periplus*, p. 27, where Lassen supposes the Arreta tribe of the Punjab to be alluded to, possibly the Arachosians, and at all events the Gandarers of Peshawur, and the Pukheli of the Indus (*τῆς Προκλίδος*, Arrian's *Πευκελιῶτις*).[1] The Baroda of our time has taken the place of the renowned

[1] C. Ritter, *Ueber Alexander des Gr. Feldzug an indischen Kaukasus*, pp. 156, 172, in *Abhandl. der Kön. Akad. d. Wissenschaf. zu Berlin* 1829, Berlin 1832.

Barygaza of the past. Farther to the north-west lies Cambay on the Mhye river, possibly the kingdom of *Μαμβάρυ* of the *Periplus*, at the extremity of the Gulf of Cambay, which bore the name *Βαράκης*, just as Run or Rin, farther to the north, was designated as *Ἐιρινόν*. Between these two deep gulfs, Run and Cambay, lies the peninsula of Guzerat, and connected therewith the smaller district of Kak'a, now inhabited by the Ahir. The whole eastern shore is a richly watered district, covered with the densest vegetation, a perfect garden, to which the name Dhanjadhur, *i.e.* granary, was given. Its finely protected harbour gave it great advantages for commerce, and on the side towards the interior of the country there are no wild ghauts to pass, before the Deccan, Malwa, and the Ganges district can be reached. Traces of its former prosperity are even now to be seen along the whole shore, and, says Lassen,[1] here was unquestionably one of the earliest stations which Indian civilisation established as it advanced southward. The fertility of the soil must have called in a crowded population, while the accessibility of the whole region was such as to stimulate to colonization and to an extension of trade, as far even as to the chief emporia of the interior district of the Magad'a,[2] *i.e.* the travelling merchants of the Ganges basin; among those leading cities being the time-honoured names of Ozene (Uggalini in Malwa) and Taghara (Doghur). The Gulf of Cambay was the best of all places as a point of connection with the West, in consequence of its admirably central position between the north and the south of India, the twofold character of the articles, and the population which came together from the banks of the Indus and from the Deccan, and the ease and freedom from danger with which it could obtain the precious commodities which it exported. Its numerous quays could well accommodate the vessels of ancient times, characterized as they were by the little depth of water which they drew, but whose numbers made up for their slight tonnage; and at those quays there was ample provision made to quickly fill the collected fleets with the most precious productions which the East could furnish. The splendid palaces whose ruins attest the former prosperity of

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* pp. 106–108.

[2] Chr. Lassen, *Beitr. zur Kunde aus dem Mahâbhârata*, in *Zeitschrift, i.a.l.* iii. p. 195.

those shores, and the large number of commercial cities, whose situation may even now be determined from Ptolemy's account, and whose great influence on Egypt and Rome was fully portrayed by Arrian, are a sufficient ground for our studying with care that Indian civilisation which in periods so remote attained such a magnificent development, but which was destined to lose its grandeur, and at length to utterly disappear.

The importance which the land of Ophir once had in the eye of all the world would seem to be made entirely apparent from the above considerations; yet before we leave the subject it is necessary to state the question afresh, and to look at it in still another point of view.

DISCURSION IV.

THE COMMODITIES BROUGHT FROM OPHIR INDIAN IN THEIR ORIGIN—THEIR NAMES (WHEN NOT HEBREW) TO BE FOUND IN THE LANGUAGES OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN INDIA.

We have thus far come to the conclusion, with Lassen, that the Ophir of the ancients was the rich coast of Abhira, between the mouths of the Indus and the Gulf of Cambay, north of 20° N. lat., and that at the time of the *Periplus maris Erythræi* all the precious commodities of southern India and of Taprobane, *i.e.* Ceylon and the Malay islands, were brought thither and accumulated at the great commercial port of Barygaza, there to be transported westward by Phœnician, Egyptian, Arabian, and Persian fleets. Of course, such a traffic as this must have required centuries for its entire development. At the time of Alexander the Great this connection between the East and the West must have attained its height, and doubtless was thoroughly familiar to the Phœnicians: we know that the conqueror of India employed them exclusively as his pilots, shipbuilders, and sailors, calling them away from the Erythræan Sea to Babylon, to help him to construct his fleet there; and it is not improbable that, long before the time of Cyrus, expeditions may have been sent thence to India, which, however, together with those which had been made around Arabia, seem to have been wholly unknown to the Greeks and Macedonians. That the European invaders of India then first

became acquainted with the movements of the tides, and experienced so much difficulty and so many perils in ascending the Euphrates, is no sufficient reason for believing that they were the first navigators of those regions, and that Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and Arabians were not already familiar with them. On the contrary, the mention of pilots, to whom Nearchus constantly ascribes his successful voyage along the coast from the Indus to the Euphrates, affords proof enough that there had been a previous acquaintance with seas, else why should there have been pilots?

"But with Alexander's destruction of Tyre, the influence of Phœnician commerce in the Red Sea and in the Indian Ocean came to an end. The accounts which we have in Isa. xxiii. and in Ezek. xxvi. are sufficient to show us that five hundred years before, and at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Phœnician ships had brought in great abundance the riches of the East to Tyre; and why may we not infer that they had done the same as far back as the reigns of David and Solomon? For we have already had occasion to allude to the ships which Hiram built at Ezion-geber, which were to go to Ophir and bring back the most valuable commodities of the East; and it will be recollected by the reader, that allusion has been made to the probability that the Phœnicians were so largely a commercial people at the time of Moses, that it was to them that the Israelites were indebted for the supplies of cinnamon which they used in preparing the anointing oil, and which they called by a word of Malay origin, but which came into the Hebrew by way of the Phœnician language.[1]

A. W. von Schlegel,[2] who first was inclined to adopt Robertson's view, that Ophir was in eastern Africa, but was compelled, like Gesenius, to adopt the conclusion that the articles which were brought from Ophir were of Indian origin, took the ground that there is no difficulty in believing that Phœnician ships sailed as far as India to procure these coveted articles of luxury.[3] We agree entirely with him in this, and remark in passing, that his view that the Phœnician settlement

[1] Compare Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, i. p. 282.

[2] A. W. von Schlegel, *Indische Bibliothek*, Bonn 1813, vol. i. p. 138.

[3] A. W. von Schlegel in *Berl. Kalender* 1829, *Einleitung*, pp. 7, 11; Gesenius, *Ophir*, p. 202.

upon the Mediterranean was originally an Arabian colony is strongly confirmed by the discovery made by Fresnel, that there is a close affinity between the Phœnician language and the Mahra (Ehhkili) of the Sabæans and the Himjarites of Yemen and Hadramaut. This is still further strengthened by the analogy in the mythologies of the Phœnicians and of the South Arabians, and by the ancient names which the Oman navigators gave to the regions visited by them,—names which, as Seetzen has shown, are clearly Phœnician in their character. To this I will add, that the location of Abhira, established by Lassen as the site of the ancient Ophir, is so comparatively near to the opposite south-eastern Arabian coast (Sabæa, the Land of Incense, and Oman), as well as to the Persian Gulf, whose shores, according to all accounts from that of Strabo to that of Herodotus, were peopled by Phœnician colonies (see Ezek. xxvii. 15, "The men of Dedan were thy merchants:" Dedan was on the Persian Gulf), that it is not at all improbable, nay, highly probable, that Phœnician commerce reached the shores of India. For if you look at the map, you will see that the distance from the mouth of the Persian Gulf—where Maketa,[1] the Cinnamon range, forms such an admirable landmark for the sailor (*Μάκετα, ἔνθεν τὰ κιννάμωμά τε καὶ ἄλλα τοιουτότροπα ἐς Ἀσσυρίους ἀγιννέεσθαι, κ.τ.λ.*, in Arriani *Histor. Indic.* c. xxxii. p. 174, ed. Schmeider, 1798)—directly eastward to Barygaza, on the Gulf of Cambay, is not so great as the Phœnician ships had to traverse during a single voyage from Tyre to Carthage.

We are now fully prepared to advance to the consideration of those proofs that Ophir lay on the eastern coast of India, which Lassen has drawn from the study of the languages once in use there, and especially from the names of the articles which Ophir sent to Palestine.

The objection which was formerly brought, and not without reason, that a voyage of the Phœnicians to Farther India, Ceylon, and even to the southern portion of the Malabar coast, is completely removed by the discovery that their voyages naturally terminated at Barygaza or Abhira, the mart where all the commodities of the East were collected and were exposed for sale. And the remark which Gesenius[2] makes, that such a theory com-

[1] Compare Chr. Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* i. p. 282, Not. 1.

[2] Gesenius, *Ophir*, p. 202.

pels us to believe that there was in remote periods a commercial connection between the delta of the Indus and the Deccan and the islands east of India, is completely disproved by the discoveries which modern philology has made, showing as they do that the ancient civilisation of India justifies our belief that such a connection was perfectly practicable, and that it was actually established. Manu's *Code of Laws*, in fact, prescribes regulations[1] concerning navigation; and many other proofs exist, such as the existence of Barygaza, with its varied articles of merchandise, that there was a communication by sea between the Indians, the Malays, and the Chinese, and the people far west of the mouths of the Indus, of which Heeren, Gesenius, and others did not know, in consequence of their ignorance of facts pertaining to ancient India which the most recent advances in philology have dispelled.[2]

The articles which were brought from Ophir, and to which allusion is made in the Scriptures, were gold, sandal-wood, precious stones, ivory, silver, apes, and peacocks—Indian products, taken as a whole. Sandal-wood is only found in southern India, and the peacock (*pavo cristatus, Junonis avis*, Ovid, *A. A.* i. 627) is indigenous to the same locality.[3] We have no light thrown upon what was given in exchange for the articles which were brought from Ophir to the West; the wants of the people of that country are therefore wholly unknown to us. The writers of the books of Kings and the Chronicles went into no particulars regarding the commercial relations of the Hebrews with Ophir; they pass without a word of explanation over the commodities which were carried thither; they are not at all specific in mentioning its geographical position. Is the reason for this to be ascribed to the Phœnician secrecy which prevailed at that time in all affairs of state? is it to be ascribed to ignorance, or does it spring from the same reason which made Homer omit to tell us where Colchis was—the fact that it was known to every one without any specification? What commodities was it possible for Palestine to send to India, then, as now, a land so full of all kinds of riches as to spare easily

[1] Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, Pt. ii. pp. 124–141.

[2] Pardessus, *Collection des Loix Maritimes*, following E. Burnouff; and Dulaurier, *Etudes, etc.*, in *Journ. Asiat.* 4th ser. 1846, T. viii. pp. 131–145.

[3] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, v. 815–823, 726, etc.

of its very over abundance,—a land so sufficient in itself as hardly to need what the most favoured countries could send to it? This is a mystery on which no light has been thrown, and which we are able only to point out, by no means to solve. Perhaps we get a glimmer of the truth by running back to that period in modern history when gold was found by the Spaniards in the New World to be a commodity so little valued by the natives, that any little trinkets which were novelties to them, easily procured no inconsiderable quantities of it. The people of Abhira or Ophir had long been a simple shepherd race; and in the time when they lived in the gold-producing regions of northern India, before they emigrated to the coast, they were in the undeveloped stage of Brahmanic Arian Indians. This would agree with all that Lassen insists upon; and under such circumstances as these, the Phœnicians, skilled in the arts as they were, would easily effect an exchange of their stuffs of purple, their cutlery, their glass wares, for the productions of the Ophir coast. In such transactions, however, the Hebrews could have little share, for the welfare of Israel did not depend on the arts and on commerce, but on agriculture; and all that Solomon could offer to Hiram king of Tyre in return for his assistance in constructing fleets and in erecting the temple, was what the earth yielded to the Hebrew industry,—wheat, barley, wine, figs, oil, and scanty supplies of balm and honey (see 1 Kings v. 11; 2 Chron. ii. 10, 15; Ezek. xxvii. 17). But on the fertile shores of India, affording ample supplies of rice, palm, and sesamum, there was little opportunity for such exchanges to be largely practicable.

Cosmas Indicopleustes tells[1] us that in his time the Himjaritic merchants who went to the Gold Coast of Africa to trade, under the protection and patronage of Axumitic kings, used to hang upon the thorn bushes bits of fresh beef, iron, and salt, and without any knowledge of the language of the natives, to effect a barter on their own terms, refusing to allow the Africans to take from the bushes what they so much and so evidently coveted, till gold enough had been laid down before them to satisfy their greed; and in this way the rude population of Zanguebar gave, in exchange for what was of little value to the Asiatic mer-

[1] Cosmas Indicopl. Χριστιανικῆς τοπογραφίας, *Fragm.* fol. 6 and 23 in M. Thevenot, *Relat. de div. voy. curieux*, Paris 1696, fol.

chants, a large return of the object most desired. Although not more than thirty days were spent upon the sickly African coast, yet these expeditions used to consume no less than six months. But in India there could have been no such barter carried on: for, in the first place, the people eat no animal food, the cow being a sacred animal; and, in the next place, the steel (*rouz*) which they manufactured was superior to any which they could import from the West.

The account given in the book of Chronicles is very short and imperfect, because the writer had but one great object in view—the portrayal of the building of the temple of Jehovah; but the supposition is evidently not an unfair one, that many costly articles to which a mere allusion is made in the Hebrew narrative, were brought from Ophir: cinnamon, calamus,[1] cassia (Ex. xxx. 23, 24[2]), spikenard (Solomon's Song i. 12[3]), bdolach or bdellium (Gen. ii. 12; Num. xi. 7), cotton, silk, indigo (ὀθόνιον καὶ νῆμα σηρικὸν καὶ Ἰνδικὸν μέλαν, in Arrian, *Peripl. mar. Erythr.* p. 22[4]), and the like. These all were brought from India, but they are not made the subject of specific description, either because they had already become perfectly familiar to the Hebrews by reason of their importation through Phœnicia, or because they had been supplied in such ample measure by the expeditions of Solomon, as to become known at once. Cotton stuffs and indigo (*Indicum nigrum*) must have been known to the Israelites from a very ancient period; for they have been found in the burial-places of Thebes, which date back to the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, and which were used for purposes of sepulture from 1822 to 1476 B.C. Both of them must have been of Indian origin.[5]

I now pass to the special consideration of the names of articles brought from Ophir, which are not of Hebrew but of Indian origin.

1. One of these is the word which is found in the original text of the Chronicles, *koph* or *kuph*, *i.e.* ape, shown by Schlegel,

[1] E. Dulaurier, *Etudes*, *l.c. Journ. Asiat.* 1846, T. viii. p. 135.

[2] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, v. 1835, pp. 823, 824; and Chr. Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* i. p. 282.

[3] Chr. Lassen, *i.a.l.* pp. 288, 289, 290.

[4] W. Vincent, *Commerce and Navigat.* vol. ii. pp. 697, 748, 749.

[5] E. Dulaurier, *Etudes, etc.* in *Journ. Asiat.* 1846, tom. viii. p. 132.

Gesenius, and Lassen[1] to be the Sanscrit *kapi* (used in the Malabar language with the same signification, the lively). From this Indian word we have the Greek κήπος, κῆβος, and κεῖπος.

2. Ivory, in the Hebrew *shen habbim*, *i.e.* tooth of the habbim, or elephant's tooth, is most probably to be traced back to an Indian origin. According to Benory, *habbim* is the Indian word *ibha* with the Hebrew article placed before it. On the other hand, the form in the old Egyptian, according to Pott, was *ebu*, which appears to be cognate with *ibha*, and may have been taken by the Israelites from Egypt into Palestine. It is therefore a matter of doubt whether the word came direct to the Hebrews and the Phœnicians from India, or was grafted upon the language of the former during their sojourn on the Nile. Another Indian word for elephant is *nage*, which again is found in Ethiopia, but which was never widely adopted in the West. Many Indian words crept into the Hebrew in this way, just as the Egyptian *ebu* became (probably through the intermediate agency of the Etruscans) the *ebur* of the Romans. The Greeks, on the contrary, appear to have become acquainted with ivory through their intercourse with the Carthaginians, and at a very early period too, for we find mention of ornaments of ivory in the verses of Homer. Schlegel has shown[2] that Herodotus was the first who used the word ἐλέφας to signify the animal himself; in Homer, it always designates the ivory which the tusk yields.

It is extremely probable that the Sanscrit word for ivory, *ibhadanta* (*danta* being tooth), conjoined with the Arabian article *al*, *al-ibhadanta*—or, slightly changed, *alifadanta*—is the original form of the Greek *elephaz*, and of the English *elephant*. The only remarkable thing in this, remarks Lassen, is the use of the Arabian article in connection with a work which passed into modern languages through the medium of the Phœnician tongue. But this difficulty is removed by recalling the fact that, according to Ezek. xxvii. 15, the Arabians of Dedan were the first who carried ivory to the market of Tyre. Another origin of the word *elephant*, assigned by Pott—Aleph Hindi, *i.e.* the Indian ox—would not

[1] Gesenius, *Ophir*, p. 202; Lassen, *Ind: Alterthumsk.* p. 538.

[2] A. W. von Schlegel, *zur Gesch. des Elephanten*, in *Indische Bibliothek*, i. B. 2, Bonn 1820, p. 145.

materially affect our argument; but Lassen refuses to accept this derivation, denying that at the remote period of the Phœnician and Hebrew expeditions to Ophir, the Persian word Hindu, used for India, had come into vogue.

3. Peacocks are given in the Hebrew text *tukhi-im*, in which Lassen thinks[1] that the Sanscrit word *çikhi* (*çikkim*) with the Deccan pronunciation can be perceived. The Malabar word *togei*, cited by Gesenius in illustration, is nothing else than *çikhim* given in the Malabar pronunciation; just as, instead of *çaka*, the true *tectonia grandis*, called by the Arabians *sadj*,[2] the Indians of the Malabar coast say *tayk* or *tek*, whence comes the English *teak*; and just as the *samudra*, *i.e.* the *zamorin* of the Portuguese in Vasco de Gama's time, becomes, according to Buchanan,[3] *tomura*, *z* being changed to *t*: *çikhim*, for *peacock*, is found in the South Deccan languages—the Tamul, Telinga, and Karnâta. I have shown in several places in the *Erdkunde von Indien*, that this vain bird is indigenous to India, and that it cannot be traced back to any other primitive home. In Martaban four varieties of it are found; in Asia as well as in China it is the heraldic bird,[4] and its feathers are esteemed fit to adorn the palaces of emperors. In India, even to this day, the plumage of the peacock is the symbol of nobility, and the bird itself is the most valued emblem of the Rajpoot heroes. It is under the sacred guardianship of Kumara, their god of war, just as it was Juno's favourite in the West.[5]

In Bundelkhund the plumage of this bird is the most gorgeous; and in Bhurtpoor Bishop Heber found the creature perfectly wild, yet precisely similar in the magnificence of its array to that which is naturalized in Europe. It was held so sacred, that, according to Heber, any one who should kill a peacock would be sure to lose his life. In the forests of Guzerat, around Brodera, Dhubay, and Surat, Forbes[6] found these birds, as well as apes, in great abundance; in exactly the

1 Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* pp. 252, 528.

2 Silvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie Arabe*, iii. p. 392; Burckhardt, *Trav. in Arab.* p. 165.

3 F. Buchanan, *Journ. through Mysore*, ii. p. 345.

4 J. Crawford, *Embassy to Ava*, 1827, iv. p. 22.

5 J. Todd, *Annals of Rajasthan*, iv. tom. i. p. 137, note.

6 Forbes, *Oriental Mem.* vol. iii. p. 314.

situation, therefore, whence they would be taken, according to our view of the location of Ophir. The same purpose which they still serve in the East was, it would seem, in the mind of the servants of Solomon: their plumage was to decorate the person and heighten the magnificence of this splendid Hebrew prince.

The Greek name of the peacock, ταώς, like the Latin *pavo*, is probably derived naturally from the cry of the bird, and is certainly not to be traced, as the learned Tychsen and Weston[1] have done, to the Persian coast of *Taόκη* (Arrian, *Indic.* c. 39; Strabo, xv. 728), where it is not indigenous. Nor is the peacock a native of Africa, where Keil locates the Ophir of the ancients.

The Greek grammarians, as bold as they were unskilled in nice philological attainments, carried their word ταώς from the spreading of the tail (ὠνόμασται δὲ ταὼς ἀπὸ τῆς τασέως τῶν πτερῶν, Athenæi *Deipn.* ix. c. 56, and *Animadv.* v. pp. 195–197). Hesychius traces the lineage of the word to Crete; Menodotus Samius, who describes the bird as the one hallowed of Juno in the temple of Samos, alleges that it was a native of that island, and was carried thence to other parts of the world (Athen. *Deipn.* xiv. c. 70), in corroboration of which he cites the figure of the peacock on the coins of Samos. Ælian, on the other hand, asserts (*Varior. hist. animad.* xiii. c. 18) that the Indian kings had these birds in their gardens, and that Alexander the Great, when in India, greatly admired them, and gave orders that no one should kill them. The same author elsewhere asserts (lib. v. c. 21) that they were carried to Greece by barbarians (λέγεται δὲ ἐκ βαρβάρων εἰς Ἕλληνας κομιθῆναι). Hence arose the general conviction that Alexander himself introduced them into his own country, and that in this way Aristotle was able to study the bird with the care with which he did, and to describe it so minutely (Aristot. *Hist. anim.* i. 2, vi. 9; and *De animal. incessu liber*, c. x.).

4. Sandal-wood, almug or algum. This tree was confounded by Luther, in his translation of the Bible, with ebony; but it is altogether different. We learn from the allusions made to it in the Scriptures, that it was used to make pillars and terraces for the temple of Jehovah, and for the royal palace, and musical instruments[2] for the singers (1 Kings x.

[1] S. Weston, *Dissert.* in *Classical Journ.* vol. xxiv. 1821, p. 20.

[2] Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. div. 1, p. 77.

11; 2 Chron. ix. 10). The word found in 2 Chron. ii. 8, Luther, as well as the English translators, took to refer to the same wood as that which was brought from Ophir. But in 1 Kings x. 12 we read, "There came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day." A very costly wood this, evidently, and one hard to characterize, but very rare, and apparently best answering to the sandal-wood of the East, which in all times has been one of the most precious of commodities.

If, says Lassen, the plural ending be taken from *algumim*, there remains *valgu*, the Sanscrit name of this wood, which, as pronounced in the Deccan, is *valgum*. Its diffusion is confined[1] to the Malabar plateau south of Goa, and the lower Deccan, where the constant demand for it to supply the inhabitants of southern Arabia, China, Thibet, and Japan, makes it a prominent article of merchandise.

The objection which has been urged by Vincent[2] and Quatremère[3] against this wood, that it is a mere perfume, and that it could not have been used by Solomon as a material from which to construct musical instruments, is entirely destitute of foundation, since it is even now employed in China for the same purposes.

Keil cites the authority of the Rabbi Kimchi, who lived three hundred years before the discovery of America, and who, in his comment on 2 Chron. ii. 8, says: "Algumim idem est quod Almuggim, arbor rubri coloris, dicta Arabum lingua Albæcam, vulgo Brasilia." This el-Bæcam of the Arabians does not contravene the Sanscrit etymology of the sandal-wood *valgu*, since this is found in commerce of a white, yellow, and red colour, and the latter kind is specially designated by Faber, Rosenmüller, and others, as red sandal-wood. Some commentators have supposed that the almug trees which are spoken of in 2 Chron. ii. 8 as growing upon Lebanon, and sent thence by Hiram to Solomon, indicate a kind of fig tree indigenous to those mountains. This view is contradicted by Keil,[4] who

[1] Ritter, *Monographie* in *Erdkunde*, v. 726, 815–823.

[2] W. Vincent, *Commerce and Navigation, etc.* vol. ii. p. 268.

[3] Et. Quatremère, *Mém. sur le Pays d'Ophir*, in *Mém. de l'Institut*, *l.c.* T. xv. 2, p. 362.

[4] Keil in *Dorpat. Beit.* ii. p. 283; compare Rosenmüller in *Bibl. Arch.* iv. 1, p. 235.

rightly takes the ground that the chronicler does not expressly assert that this "almug" tree grew upon Lebanon, but that it was one of the kinds of wood which were derived by Solomon of Hiram; yet it is extremely difficult to see how the Hebrew king should ask for cedars and fig trees (2 Chron. ii. 3), which were indigenous to Lebanon, and also for the almug, which did not grow there, and yet that all these varieties should be hewn down upon the mountains of Phœnicia and sent in ships to Joppa (2 Chron. ii. 16). Rosenmüller calls attention to the fact, that in the parallel passage 1 Kings v. 8 only cedars and fir trees are mentioned as those which Solomon desired of Hiram. He suspects, therefore, that the word almug trees was inserted by the chronicler or the copyist on conjecture, just as the words "to Tarshish," which have already been considered in these pages. The remark of Keil, that there is no ground for believing that this article came from India, because the signification of the Hebrew word is not entirely clear, seems to have no weight, or rather to be exactly wrong, when we take into account the recent etymology which Lassen claims for it, and the clear manner in which he traces it to the *valugum* wood of the southern Deccan.

The general charge[1] made by those who wish to sustain the theory that Ophir and Tarshish were separate localities—that the words which indicate commodities not found in many parts of the ancient world have been brought too prominently forward, made too much of—has a certain degree of truth in it, if we admit that these words are what they are alleged to be, mere ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, that they have no well-determined meaning, and their other forms of the same word do not occur in cognate dialects. But it is not true that those words are mere ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, since they occur in two books at least, and in some cases in several; and it would lead to very great confusion to follow that theory out, and refuse to lay stress on or draw arguments from words which occur but once or twice in the Scriptures. But it will not be denied, that on the subject which is now under discussion we have light thrown not only from the etymology of words, but from ethnographical, historical, and physical illustrations, all combining to make the inference in favour of an Indian Ophir very strong. It is very true that we

[1] Keil in *Dorpat. Jahrb.* ii. pp. 234, 278, *i.a.l.*

attain to no certainty here, as indeed we do not in so many other things. But human knowledge is at best but a thing of shreds and patches, and elsewhere we have to be content with the highest probabilities. That the view of those who oppose the position taken in these pages regarding the locality of Ophir is open to grave doubts and to serious objections, hardly any one would be bold enough to deny. All that can be done in this matter, is to weigh all the probabilities with the utmost care, to trace out all the unquestioned facts which relate to the subject, and to decide with entire impartiality, according to the preponderating weight of evidence. Only in this way can the truth be reached at all: only in this way can we, where the absolute truth is perhaps unattainable, show the homage which we would gladly render to the spirit of truth.

There are some other objects which were brought to Palestine from Ophir, of which I have yet to speak, but about which it is difficult to attain the utmost correctness, so much have they been subjected to conjecture, instead of being dealt with simply and straightforwardly.

5. Gold was unquestionably one of the chief objects in quest of which expeditions were sent to Ophir; and yet India has been, up to the most modern times, as little known as Arabia as a gold-producing country. Africa is the only land which has, from the remotest antiquity up to the present day, been spoken of universally as *par excellence* the native soil of gold. As this has been from the earliest times to the present day the weightiest reason with some commentators for supposing that the Ophir of Solomon's expeditions lay on the eastern coast of that continent, Quatremère, who has been the most prominent advocate of this view, remarks[1] that India, which has from the earliest antiquity produced vast amounts of the most costly articles, has always been a receiver, never an exporter, of gold; that thither, since the discovery of America, even the mineral treasures of the New World have flowed, but never returned. There may be, indeed have been, occasional acts of violence, which have brought them thence; but we never hear of a systematic removal of gold from India.

Still, even this objection, plausible as it is, does not sweep

[1] E. Quatremère, *Memoire sur le Pays d'Ophir*, in *Mém. de l'Institut*, *l.c.* Paris 1845, T. xv. P. ii. p. 361

away the claims of India to be the gold-exporting Ophir of the Bible, any more than it would those of Arabia: for Tarshish or Spain has no longer its silver-laden fleets, as it had in the time of the ancient Phœnicians and Phocians, when Argathonius was its ruler; and however weighty the reasons for regarding Arabia, in view of its ancient gold-producing character, as Ophir, yet more weighty are those which led to the conclusion that India was the locality in question.

Bochart and Michaelis[1] have both criticised the passages in ancient writers which allude in general terms to the gold of Arabia (Diod. Sicul. ii. c. 50): in them the assertion is made, that it was found pure in the sand, in masses, some of which were as large as a chestnut, and particularly common in the neighbourhood of Debac (Diod. Sicul. iii. c. 45). We need call attention not only to the size of those nuggets, which was truly remarkable if they were found pure (*ἄπυρον*: in Agatharchides, *de Rubro Mari*, ed. Huds. p. 60), but also to the circumstance that their primitive purity would excite the cupidity of the Greeks much more strongly than the same amount of gold which had gone through the smelting process, since certain magical qualities were attributed to gold which came from the earth unalloyed. Yet the natives of the regions where it was found are asserted to have set no value upon it, and to have exchanged it for half its weight of iron. The scanty allusions of the ancient writers are the only tokens which we have of the discovery of gold in Arabia; and these are manifestly very slight, there being but a single distinct allusion to the existence of gold in the sand of the river-beds of that country, and no traces that a traffic in it was maintained by the numerous tribes which then existed there, and of whom we know so little. For although Diodorus alleges that the Alilæan and Gasandian women strung nuggets of gold, and wore them as necklaces and as bracelets, yet this is characteristic of races far more barbarous, and is never considered a proof that the gold so used is indigenous to the country, but that it was gained, or may have been gained, by the exchange of such articles as are native to the place. And though Agatharchides, Diodorus, and others, speak in glowing terms of the great wealth and luxury of the Himjaritic princes, yet it all might have come

[1] Michaelis, *Spiceleg. l.c.* ii. p. 186.

from the industry of the people, and their commerce with outside nations, who had gold and other commodities to exchange for the productions of southern Arabia. No account has come down to us of the existence of establishments for melting and refining gold, and no traces are now to be seen of excavations made with a view to its quarrying. Gold-washings, which never yield but small amounts at once, do not prove, because still continued there, that great quantities of metal were once found: they are in their nature inexhaustible; and among a poor and indolent people they will continue from age to age, just as they have done for thousands of years in Africa, and as they have done in the upper bed of the Indus since the time of Herodotus.

The queen of Sheba seems to have procured the gold which she brought as a gift to Solomon, not from Yemen, but rather from the opposite African coasts: for all modern efforts to discover gold ores in Arabia have been put forth in vain. Niebuhr declares positively, that no gold at all is to be found in the country, neither in its rivers nor in mines, except it has been brought in from foreign lands. And no later observer has been able to detect a trace of it: nor are there to be seen any of the diggings which, in many other countries, were made in ancient times by people eager in their blind quest for the much coveted metal, and which remain as the testimonial of former greed. When Seetzen declares his convictions strongly that Oman was the ancient goal of Solomon's expeditions, he rests mainly on the hypothesis, that because some ores (copper and lead, according to Niebuhr) were found at Ofra, *i.e.* his conjectured Ophir, a more precious metal still must exist near by; but he does not profess to have ever seen it. Yet he honestly confesses, that in his opinion the larger part of the gold possessed by the Sabæans came from the coast of Zanguebar.

In India—which Heeren, A. W. von Schlegel, and others,[1] have asserted is completely destitute of gold, in whose southern portion, the Deccan, it is not wholly wanting—the real gold-producing region, both of ancient as well as of modern times, must be sought in the north, the mountainous portion, only known to Europeans within the last few centuries, and whence

[1] Keil, *i.a.l.* in *Dorpat. Beitr.* ii. p. 278; and Heeren, *Ideen, etc.* i. 3, p. 349 et seq.

come the light-skinned Brahmins,[1] and the Abhira of the time prior to the reign of Solomon. Among the rivers of the Himalayas the supply of gold is abundant. What Herodotus heard regarding the large amounts of this metal found in that so remote India (iii. 91, 102), has been fully confirmed[2] by the investigations of modern times. Even the circumstance that a kind of ant extracted the gold,[3] is now granted by the best Indian authorities; and the authenticity of Herodotus has thus received a fresh confirmation.

Even the Deccan is able to exhibit its gold-producing regions, whose gifts are not inconsiderable: they alone would be sufficient to disprove the assertion that India has no gold. I have already spoken so fully on this subject, however, in the *Erdkunde von Indien*, that I need enter on no full recapitulation of the subject here. I content myself with a mere allusion to the leading features of the discussion.

In the southern Deccan, the celebrated diamond mines in the bed of the Kistna are well known; but on both sides of this stream, the northern and the southern, the channels of the Palaur and of the Godavery are rich in gold, which is carried down in the form of a fine sand, and is extracted from the mud of the bottom by repeated washings. The metal is found throughout a region extending from the Godavery, in Golconda, beyond Nagpoor, in Berar, and as far north as the river Mahanada, the trap formations of whose basin yield it in no inconsiderable quantities. The high civilisation enjoyed by this region, and the extent of its commerce by sea, induce the belief that gold was once an article of no inconsiderable importance to the traffic of the whole coast. I omit specific allusion to slighter quantities of this valuable metal, the gold sand of the Nilgherry, that in Wynaad at the upper Beyhur, that at the Nilawbar to the east of Calicut, the more abundant deposits in northern Assam, and in the Ganges basin along the border of Nepaul and elsewhere, because these localities were too far distant from the western coast to have much influence on that Ophir traffic with which we are at present more directly concerned.

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumsk.* i. p. 238.
[2] C. Ritter, *Erdkunde*, iii. 654–660.
[3] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Archäologie*, p. 40, Not. 1.

The peninsula Guzerat, in the neighbourhood of Abhira, and of the great emporium of Barygaza, was not wholly destitute of gold; and even now, in the two rivers which flow into the Gulf of Cutch, particularly in the Aji, gold grains are washed out from the mud.

The region, however, which supplied Abhira, the Indian Ophir coast, with its richest stores of this metal, which Solomon must have desired in no inconsiderable quantities, since it was to be devoted to the building of the temple, was that watered by the upper Indus and the Sfatadru or Sutlej, together with all their tributaries along the northern boundary of Hindostan, fed as they were by the waters of Greater and Lesser Thibet, and especially the latter, the Leh or Ladak, and the Baltistan of our day. This is the district referred to by Herodotus as that which in his time sent gold to the west; this was the locality where the Dardi or Daradæ of Megosthenes, Arrian, Strabo, and Pliny lived: the region on the borders of Lesser Thibet, where Diriras, Daward, and the people called Dards or Durds, have been discovered by British travellers, and not excluding the district discovered by Vigne in Iskardo, on the river Baspa.[1] It is the Uttera Kuru of the ancient Sanscrit geography, interpreted the "servant of Kurera,"—Kurera being the name of the god who, in the primitive Indian mythology, was believed to preside over wealth, and to be the patron and protector of merchants. The gold of this rich region is quarried out sometimes by myreks, a kind of marmot, which, like the rhabarbar and the yak, is indigenous to that high plateau; and Moorcroft saw these little creatures burrowing in the ground, and tracked their holes, but he found bits of gold of no inconsiderable size which they had quarried out, so to speak. The same observer tells us that the soil where the precious metal is found in India is precisely similar, even in the very redness of the colour, to that which yields the greatest amount in Africa. On the Sutlej, north of Daba and around Shipke, Moorcroft found men at work digging for gold; and such was their success, that although they hired the right of search, leasing land for this particular purpose, the labour of three months paid all their expenses, and gave them enough to support them the rest of

[1] G. T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iscardo, etc.*, Lond. 1812, vol. ii. p. 287.

the year without labouring. We learn from the same authority that all the streams in Ladak which flow from the country north of Korakorum bring down washings of gold, and that it has been found in the rivers Sinketjou, Sing-te, and Shajuk. Around Gertope, too, on the upper Indus, Gerard discovered that all the minor rivers were rich in gold sand; and where the particles were very small, an amalgam with quicksilver was made by the natives, who appear to have understood the process from a very remote period. Even farther eastward the yield of gold must be not inconsiderable: for when Webb had traversed the Leburg pass, and had reached the boundary between China and Thibet, beyond which he was not permitted to go, he encountered several Chinese merchants or pedlars, whose route of traffic lay between Hlassa, Ladak, and Cashmere, and whose chief articles of merchandise were gold dust, salt, borax, pearls, and Cashmere wool. Moorcroft adds his testimony that in Shipke a brisk trade was carried on with the gold grains which were found there; and Gerard informs us further, that in western Thibet gold dust is a prominent article of merchandise, and that the dealing in it gives occupation to a large number of merchants.

It was the basin of the upper Indus, then, which in the time of Herodotus, as now, was so remarkable for the supplies of this much desired metal. But that the tributaries of the middle Indus also brought down from the mountains no inconsiderable amounts of gold, we learn from the accounts of the washings for it in the Emperor Akber's time,[1] which fell in the middle ages: the method employed has been fully described by Abulfazil. Tolerably large-sized grains of gold were found, and even the Pugmutty yielded some. From the Chinese annals of the fifth and sixth centuries, we learn that Kachiriralo, *i.e.* Cashmere, and the Punjab furnished pure unsmelted gold; and Wilson[2] has very recently discovered, that even in the *Mahâbhârata* (i. p. 375, v. 1860) this metal is spoken of as a gift to king Judhisht-hira, one of the Panduides: it is said there to be brought "from the north country," and it is called

[1] *Ayeen Akbery, or the Institutes of the Emperor Akber*, trans. from the Persian by F. Gladwin, London 1800, vol. ii. p. 136.

[2] H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua, a Descriptive Account of Antiq. and Coins of Afghanistan*, Lond. 1841, iv. p. 135, Note 2.

by the singular name ant-gold, which we now know refers to the manner in which it is extracted from the earth and brought to the surface by these little insects.

There can in view of all this no longer remain a doubt, that the Abhîra, who had in the most remote period been a tribe of shepherds on the upper Indus, and had thence worked their way down to the lower basin of the same river, and had founded a settlement on the sea-coast, were in the possession, at the time of Solomon, of no inconsiderable quantities of gold, which they gladly exchanged in return for the commodities which other nations, not varying widely from them in extent of civilisation, as was the case with the Phœnicians and Hebrews, brought them.

If now all these data be taken in conjunction with the passage in Gen. ii. 11, 12, "The name of the first [river] is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone," it would seem as if the region which has been brought so fully under our notice in this discussion fully corresponds therewith. If the Gihon be the Oxus, and the Pison be the Indus, as the old expositors believed, the latter, according to the ancient Hebrew account of the first home of man, surrounds the country of Havilah or Chavilah. This, says Lassen,[1] is all the more manifest from so brief and compact a description, because of the preciousness of the articles described as indigenous to the spot. The word bdellium found in the passage just cited has received many interpretations: Lassen, however, inclines to the opinion that it signifies musk. In precious stones India is the richest land in all the world; and we have already seen that gold was abundant in the basin of the Indus and all its tributaries. To this add one more reason for accepting the hypothesis just brought forward, that, according to Lassen, the word Chavilah can be traced back to an Indian origin—Kampila, the name of the district where the ants dig out the gold. This is not accordant, however, with the etymology of the word Pison, which is of Semitic origin, and signifies extending one's self, overflowing.

There is no lack of silver in India, for all the lead mines are uncommonly rich in it—those of Mdeypar, for example.

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Archäologie*, p. 529; compare Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, iii. p. 77.

And just as little deficiency is there in precious stones,[1] as the rubies of Ceylon and Golconda, the diamonds of the Deccan, and the onyxes and cornelians of the Nerbudda bear witness. But silver was naturally a metal less prized in Palestine during the reign of Solomon, since supplies of it could be easily brought from the mines of Tartessus in Spain (1 Kings x. 27).

Thus it appears that all the articles which were brought home from Ophir were indigenous to India, while neither silver nor precious stones were found in Arabia; for the onyxes, jaspers, and cornelians which are found there are not worthy to bear the name "precious stones," when compared with those which are brought from the Gulf of Cambay and the shores of the Nerbudda. Of emeralds, which are found in great perfection on the opposite African coast, Niebuhr did not detect a trace in Arabia. No later observer has reported the existence of gems in the latter country; and, indeed, Niebuhr tells us that the Arabic language, which is so rich in all other kinds of words, has none to designate the various kinds of jewels, and expresses them all by the single word *jakut*, conjoined with the name of the colour characteristic of the gem under discussion. How utterly different from this was the influence of the precious stones of India upon the western world of primeval times! That the ancient Babylonians received jewels from the north of India at a very remote period, was long ago admitted: it was claimed that they passed by land, not by sea, but no proof of this was given.[2] Why may it not have been by way of the Persian Gulf?

DISCURSION V.

REASONS ASSIGNED BY VINCENT, KEIL, QUATREMERE, AND OTHERS, FOR DOUBTING THAT OPHIR WAS SITUATED IN INDIA, AND FOR BELIEVING THAT IT WAS IN YEMEN OR SOFALA—CONCLUSION.

With all the weight of the evidence that the Ophir of Solomon is to be sought in India, witnessed as it is by history, by philology, by the physical character of the country and the

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Archäol.* i. pp. 239–243.

[2] C. Ritter, *Vorhalle europäischer Völkergesch. vor Herodotus um den Kaukasus, und an den Gestaden des Pontus*, Berlin 1820, pp. 125–137.

nature of its productions, it is not to be denied that doubts have been raised against this position, as they have been, and can always be, against anything which has to be traced back to a very remote period, and to be followed with the utmost delicacy, care, and skill. For the highest wisdom of man is and will remain a mere thing of shreds and patches (1 Cor. i. 19), and in our times this is not confessed by all; and it is no less imperfect in the domain which we tread in the course of this investigation. Bochart, not content with a single Ophir, in order to remove all doubts, selected two—the one in Taprobane, the other in Arabia. Gesenius, Letronne,[1] and others, cite the custom of many of the ancients of indicating not only Hindostan, but also the west coast of the Indian Ocean, Yemen, and east Africa, by the term India; in one word, to apply it to all those commercial centres like the Dioscorides island (Sokotora), Cape Aromatum (Guardifui), and Cape Aromatum (Macetæ Promont.), which could play the part of India, and where Arabians and Phœnicians could procure Indian goods without being compelled to go thither for them,—an argument the more probable, since we have no direct proof that the Phœnicians ever went themselves so far eastward as India. Vincent,[2] together with Gosselin and Volney, laid much stress on the fact that the account of the voyage to Ophir was given in the same chapter of the Bible, and in immediate connection with the narrative of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon; and they argued thence that the Ophir which then came into sight would naturally be connected with that South Arabian district over which the Sabæan monarch ruled. And that Sheba (Seba or Saba) was undoubtedly the ancient Sabæa, is distinctly affirmed in Ezek. xxvii. 22, where, in the prophecy of the downfall of Tyre, after mention of other Arabian provinces, the words occur, "The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold." In ver. 15 of the same chapter we also read, "The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles [*i.e.* distant coasts] were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony." By this

[1] Letronne, *Sur une Mission, etc.*, in *Mém. de l'Institut Roy. de France, Acad. des Inscr. et Bell. Lettr.* Paris 1833, T. x. pp. 222–235.

[2] W. Vincent, *The Commerce and Navig. l.c.* vol. ii. p. 267.

we see that some of the Arabian tribes (although some centuries subsequent, it must be confessed, to the primitive expeditions to Ophir) were in the possession of a part at least of the valuable commodities which Solomon had imported, and that they exported them to Tyre; and yet these Arabians transacted their commerce solely by means of caravans: they were no sailors, and only the Sabæans among them understood the art of navigation.[1] The testimony of Aristeas (*Aristææ historiæ per* LXX., *etc.*, Oxon. 1692, p. 40), which Vincent[2] cites on account of its mention of the introduction of perfumes, jewels, and gold into Judæa by the hands of Arabians, and to show that the Debæ on Strabo's "gold dust river" (xvi. 777) were those travelling Arabian merchants, is inadmissible. (Vincent derives the name Debæ from *deb*, *i.e.* gold; *dahab* is, however, according to Niebuhr, the Arabic for that metal. Fresnel, on the contrary, traces the word spelt Dedebæ by Agatharchides to Dhib, *i.e.* wolf.) Vincent finds a difficulty in this: there is no mention in the account of the expeditions to Ophir of spices being among the articles brought back, and in this he finds an argument against India as the site of Ophir; but, on the other hand, in the description of the presents brought to Solomon by the queen of Sheba, great stress is laid upon the spices which she carried to Jerusalem. In 2 Chron. ix. 9 we read: "And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon." Yet this falls in with the reason which has already been given in these pages, why no cinnamon, and none of the other spices which had been previously well known among the Hebrews, were specially mentioned in the brief allusions to the Ophir expeditions.

The objection of Heeren,[3] that although India was so rich in gold, yet it could not have been alluded to by the name Ophir, because none of the ancients mention the exportation of gold thence, and that if the Phœnicians at the time of Solomon received so much of this metal from India, they would not at a later period have relinquished so profitable a

[1] Keil in *Dorpat. Beitr.* ii. p. 281.
[2] W. Vincent, *l.c.* ii. p. 269.
[3] Heeren, *Ideen*, i. 2, pp. 96, 104.

department of traffic, and at the time of their greatly extended commerce on the Persian Gulf they would not have neglected India, is easily refuted, if it be remembered, that before the time of Solomon, Hiram the king of Tyre was in the possession of large sums of gold (1 Kings ix. 14), whose existence cannot be explained, excepting on the supposition that they had been brought from the Indian coast. That the Phœnicians could not procure supplies of gold thence, is explained in part by the sudden termination of the splendour of Solomon's reign, and by the existence of a large number of causes which conspired to drive them more and more from the East to the West. The growing enterprise and prosperity of the Chaldæans and the Babylonians, and still later of the Nabathæans, gradually extinguished the Phœnician power on the Persian Gulf, and compelled it to seek new fields in Cyprus, Barca, Carthage, and Bætica. Heeren asks,[1] with great pertinency, why, if the Phœnicians stood in such close connection with India by way of the Persian Gulf, they were willing, during the reign of Solomon, and under his auspices, to make the voyage to India on the stormy and dangerous Red Sea. But I answer, the Phœnicians were a far-sighted race of merchants; and th[illegible]saw, in view of the great development of Babylonish power, [illegible] advantages of a double route to India, just as the Italia[illegible]d in the middle ages, and just as the British seek a threef[illegible] connection with India to-day,—one by way of the Cape, [illegible]ther still by way of the Red Sea, and still another, an ove[illegible]land route, by way of the Euphrates valley.

It is possible that at the time of Hiram himself a crisis had come in the affairs of Tyrian commerce, and that that king was compelled from motives of policy to form an alliance with his traditional foes, and with the assistance of David and Solomon to open the Red Sea to his ships, whence the Idumæans had before effectually repelled them. The period which favoured such an enterprise did not last very long after the death of Solomon; for the possession of Idumæa by the kings of Judah was temporary, and ceased directly after the reign of Jehoshaphat, the country once more regaining its independence (2 Kings viii. 20-22). Eighty years later, under Azariah, Edom was again recovered to Judah, and the port

[1] Heeren, *Ideen*, ii. 1, p. 458.

of Elath rebuilt (2 Kings xiv. 22); but again, sev[redacted] thereafter, Rezin the monarch of Syria, living in D[redacted] so thoroughly destroyed it, that the power of the I[redacted] nation utterly disappeared from the Red Sea, and the trade with Ophir was cut entirely off not only from Israelite, but also from Phœnician participation (2 Kings xvi. 6). It appears probable that at that time the Abhira had relinquished their simple shepherd life, had advanced to a higher stage of civilisation, and given up the possession of their native gold-producing district, and that the emigration was also in progress of the Brahmanic Indo-Arians from their primitive home on the seaboard to the basin of the Ganges. Yet all definite data relating to this are wanting. But sufficient investigations have been made to elicit the fact, that three hundred years before the time of Alexander the Great, and therefore shortly after the termination of the traffic with Ophir by way of Ezion-geber, the rivalry between the Phœnicians and the nations on the Euphrates and Tigris, the Chaldeans and Babylonians, had caused the expulsion of the former from the Persian Gulf. The time predicted in Isa. xliii. 14, "For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, a[redacted] Chaldeans, whose cry is in their ships," had not the[redacted] and the great king Nebuchadnezzar, then in the [redacted] of his power, was constructing the magnificent Euphr[redacted] Nabor-Malcha, building the fine seaport Teredon at t[redacted] of the river, had completed the destruction of Old T[redacted] a siege of thirteen years' duration, and was then threate[redacted] overrun Idumæa. This seems entirely to remove the objection alluded to above, and which was reiterated by Tuch.[1]

It is in the highest degree probable, that during the flourishing reign of Solomon, and as a result of the alliance with Hiram, the foundations of Thammor or Tadmor (in the Greek, Palmyra) were laid,[2] and that that city was intended to be a station in the great commercial highway from Jerusalem to Thapsacus on the Euphrates, the great emporium of the trade of Phœnicia, Palestine, and Egypt; thence the river communication with the sea was direct. The road from Jeru-

[1] Tuch, *Recension* in *Hallisch. Allgemein Literat. Zeitung* 1835, Nr. 80, p. 16.

[2] H. Ewald, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, vol. iii. Pt. 1, p. 74.

salem to Thapsacus was entirely under the control of Solomon, and could easily be made advantageous to the Tyrians: it is therefore very natural to believe that, as a result of the discontinuance of the alliance between the Hebrews and the Phœnicians, and the rise of the intestine strife between Judah and Israel, the jealousy of the powerful Nebuchadnezzar prompted him to undertake that destructive expedition against Tyre, which resulted in its downfall. The founding of Tadmor, a place called into note by Solomon, and the opening of the great commercial highway connecting Palestine, Egypt, and Phœnicia with the basin of the upper Euphrates, seem to be intimately connected with the expeditions to Ophir, and in part to be a result of them. Yet the glory of Tadmor lasted not over a century, not later than till the last voyage to the land of gold.

A. W. von Schlegel has urged, as an objection against India as the ancient Ophir, that apes and peacocks are not merely Indian productions, but that they are also met in Arabia and Africa. It has been alleged, too, that the *tukhi-im* of the Hebrews were not peacocks, but entirely different birds. Keil thinks them the *Aves Numidicæ* or *Gallinæ Afræ*, an African product, usually called *tucca*. Huetius, Reland, and Quatremère understand by the word *tukhi-im* parrots, those having a very gorgeous plumage, and more of a merchandisable article than peacocks, because (as is alleged) they do not readily propagate when removed from their native province. The objection urged by Schlegel is unfounded, for there is no other place in the world excepting India where the peacock is indigenous. Quatremère argues as follows: It could not have been peacocks which Solomon imported, else they would have perpetuated their kind, as they do even now in still more northerly latitudes; but we find no mention of this bird in the Song of Solomon. But in this kind of negation there is no proof: we are not told that peacocks were always brought back from Ophir, nor that they were imported in any considerable number. It was enough that this magnificent bird should be brought to the sumptuous court of the Hebrew king as a novelty and a very rare adornment, not as common and multi-

[1] Et. Quatremère, *Memoire sur le Pays d'Ophir*, in *Mém. de l'Institut*, Paris 1845, T. xv. Part ii. pp. 362, 375.

plied possession. Nor did it at all enter into the plan of the writer of the sacred narrative to inform his readers whether the breeding of the bird was continued in Jerusalem. It is a question, however, that is not yet answered, whether the introduction of the peacock into Samos, to become the well-known *pavo Junonis* of the Samians, did not occur through the agency of the ancient connection of the Phœnicians and the Israelites with Ophir during the reigns of Hiram and Solomon. Quatremère cites Masudi and another Persian author, to the effect that during the reign of Sultan Mahmud, A.D. 1000, the peacock was carried from India to Herat in Persia, and succeeded in propagating its kind; but granting this, we have not in this the least explanation for finding traces of this bird farther west, running back to a far more remote period, nor the least reason for denying that the bird was first naturalized in Hither Asia by Solomon, and was then for the first time removed from Ophir.

Even earlier accounts than those collected by Quatremère from Masudi—those which the industry of the learned Bochart[1] has brought together, and which speak of the "emigration westward of an Indian bird called the peacock, found in Media"—can in no way affect our conclusion. Bochart made this collection of passages from the *Acharn. de legatis Persicis*, merely to show that this bird was not a native of Samos. And that it was not at all indigenous to Media, is fully proved from the words of Sultan Babur, dropped in the course of his instructive comments[2] on matters of natural history: "The peacock lives in its native wildness and beauty in India, as far as Seirad and Bajour, *i.e.* to the southern base of the Hundakhu mountains, where the river Cabul enters the Indus; but at a higher elevation and at a more northern latitude it is not found, and therefore is not met in Kunawar and Lemghanat." It could not be indigenous, therefore, on the lofty plateau of Cabul, nor in the cold mountain-land of Media, and it must have been imported to Herat in Khorassan, as Masudi states. There is, besides, a third way in which the peacock could be brought to Europe and diffused there,—namely, by the agency of Alexander the Great.

Quatremère's objections fall utterly to the ground, and his efforts are entirely unavailing to remove the ancient Ophir

[1] Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, lib. ii. c. 16.

[2] Babur, *Memoirs*, ed. W. Erskine, London 1826, p. 318.

from India to Africa, where no peacocks are found. The word parrot, which he proposes to substitute for peacock, has no alliance to the *tukhi-im* of Scripture, whose Indian etymology has been fully pointed out by Lassen, as has been shown already in these pages.

Just as little weight is there in Quatremère's[1] objection that sandal-wood was used as a perfume, and that, as Solomon used it for the construction of articles of ornament and convenience, the algum could not have been sandal-wood. But I have showed on a previous page, that the same wood is in common use even now among the Japanese and the Chinese. For even could he substantiate his assertion that Africa, where he locates Ophir, is rich in rare and costly woods,—the almug, one of them, as he thinks, rich in *bœkam* for colouring, in *cana* and *sadj* for fine inlaid work, in *madigascon palisander* for the nicer kinds of cabinet work, and in others,—yet his case would be far from being made out.

It is just so, as it seems to me, with Quatremère's other objections to the productions of India. Precious stones, according to him, are found in Africa as abundantly as in other parts of the world; and he cites, in confirmation of it, a statement made by Cosmos, that emeralds, such as those in modern times found by Caillaud in the mines of Zabourah, were anciently exported from Africa to India. But this one little circumstance, so far from disproving the great want of jewels throughout the African continent, only brings it out in still stronger light.

That there were apes of the most varied species in Africa is well known; but although Masudi, writing in the tenth century, speaks of apes being brought to Nubia and trained there, and Caillaud confirms this in his *Voyage a Meroë* (120, 188), yet there is no binding force in thus compelling us to the belief that Solomon's Ophir expeditions cast anchor off the African coast. The plea has also been made, that the southern shore of Yemen, the ancient Sabæa, was the goal of the Hebrew mariners, for even now apes are found there. I have shown, in the appropriate volumes of my *Erdkunde von Arabien*, that these creatures are met in great numbers in Oman and Yemen, and more sparingly northward, some being seen as far up as

[1] Quatremère, *Mém. l.c.* xv. P. ii. pp. 362, 376.

Asyr among the Kora mountains, and some at Jebel Sherat on the very borders of Palestine. There is therefore no decisive proof of the location of Ophir to be found in the *habitat* of the ape, for it is met on all three of the coasts which are the subject of discussion. But the coupling of the words "apes and peacocks" puts a different face upon the problem, and leads to the inference that the place where the bird was found would, in the lack of definitive evidence for or against, be the place whence the other creature would be brought.

Far better founded seems the objection against the ivory being that of India, which was brought in such large amounts from Ophir to ornament the throne of Solomon and to decorate his temple; and at first,[1] A. W. von Schlegel was inclined to adopt the view of Robertson, that Sofala or Mozambique was the goal of the Hebrew expeditions, since it lay in the very nature of things that from an early period Africa should be able to deal more largely in ivory than India. Quatremère presses this objection[2] into good service, and urges with great reason and skill that ivory was never a prominent export from India: for the Indians do not make war upon the elephant as the Africans do, who are in perpetual contest with this creature, and who attack it not simply for the purpose of killing, but out of the mere desire of wounding or laming it. Besides, the ivory of India is by no means of that fine quality which characterizes the African product. But really there does not lie much intrinsic weight in this as an argument against the location of Ophir on the Indian coast; for this only disproves the existence of a great traffic in ivory there, but by no means denies the possibility of procuring a sufficient supply for the needs of Solomon in decorating his own court. We have no reason to believe that the use of this article ever became at all diffused and common among the Hebrews or the Phœnicians; but were Africa the goal of their voyages, there is much cause for thinking that its abundant stores of ivory would have made the article not only well known, but perfectly familiar, in Palestine. And although it is true[3] that more than one-half of the tusks

[1] *Indische Bibliothek*, 1823, 1 vol. p. 138.

[2] Quatremère, *Mém. l.c.* p. 361.

[3] M'Culloch, *Diction. of Commerce*, 2d ed. Lond. 1834, p. 737; D. Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, Lond. 1805, vol. iv. p. 469.

of the four to five thousand elephants which yearly supply Europe with ivory come from Africa, yet the rest come mainly from India and Ceylon. Ptolemy speaks of seeing there, at the base of the Malli Mountains, the *pascua elephantum* (Ptol. vii. 4, 180); and the *Periplus* (p. 28, ed. Huds.) alludes explicitly to ivory as an article of export from Barygaza in common with nard, bdellium, onyxes, myrrh, cotton and silk stuffs, and pepper.

Another objection raised by Quatremère is, that in the passage in Kings (1 Kings x. 22) relating to the valuable commodities brought from Ophir, the word *shenhabbim* is translated ivory, whereas another word (*shen*) is used elsewhere in the Scriptures indicating the same article (1 Kings x. 18, Amos iii. 15, etc.); and his inference from this is, that *shenhabbim* designates not ivory, but a different commodity, perhaps the tusk of the hippopotamus. But this objection, which is purely hypothetical, is partly removed by the argument drawn by Lane, and cited on a preceding page, from the etymology of the Sanscrit word *ibka*, and partly by the evident naturalism of the abbreviation of *shenhabbim* to *shen*, *i.e.* tooth; for nothing would be more readily adopted than the use of the general word tooth, when the costliest one of all which the world affords had been brought from a distant land. Besides, although the tusk of the hippopotamus is used as an article of merchandise in our time, yet there is not the slightest ground for believing that it was at all made a subject of traffic at an ancient period.

Lastly, the strongest arguments adduced by Quatremère in favour of Sofala on the African coast as the location of Ophir, are laid on the gold of that district. The great number of the observations relating to this special department of our subject induces me, in closing the discussion, to dwell with some degree of fulness upon them; the more so because the objections raised by this eminent scholar, to whom I confess a very large indebtedness, are so acute and so learned. With truth as our aim, it would not be right to pass the results reached by so profound a student without an effort to refute them where they may be incorrect.

The expeditions to Ophir, says Quatremère,[1] brought riches so immense to the Jews, that Solomon was able to erect edifices

[1] Quatremère, *Mém. sur le Pays d'Ophir*, *l.c.* T. xv. ii. p. 350.

of unheard-of splendour, and adorn his court with a sumptuous magnificence that was unrivalled. Most unfortunate, however, were the results of this close alliance with the Phœnicians; for their gods—Baal, Astarte, and others—were speedily preferred to Jehovah, and a degree of luxury, till then unknown in Judæa, was introduced, which plunged the country into want, and led to an unhealthy expansion of prices. The first result was more exactions on the people to meet the needs of the splendid Solomon; then a hardness of feeling towards their showy and extravagant monarch; then open rebellion under Jeroboam, and the division of the kingdom, even then small, into two which were smaller still, engendering a hatred which lasted for centuries. During the long wars between the divided parts of the former united people, Ophir was completely forgotten; and the Phœnicians, who stood in closer connection with Israel than with Judah, were able to receive no further assistance from the southern kingdom in undertaking an expedition thither by way of the Ælanitic Gulf.

Although in this representation too much influence may possibly be assigned to the gold which was brought from Ophir, seeing that we have no means of ascertaining how numerous the expeditions thither were, nor what was the precise result of its importation upon the national life, yet the gold of the East cannot have been without its measure of influence. The idolatry of the Phœnicians, however, had affected the Hebrews unfavourably prior to the alliance made with them by Solomon.

Dhafar (Dhofar, Taphar), Quatremère, following in the steps of Gosselin, does not consider at all likely to have been the ancient Ophir, because it lay a number of days' journey distant from the sea. In this he follows, too, the views of Edrisi, Abulfeda, and Niebuhr, who locate Dhofar in the interior of Tehama, near Jerim. But the voyages made by the Byzantines in the time of Constantine and Procopius, extending from Æla as far as the Himjaritic Thafar, are known to us; and from authorities still more recent we learn that Zafar was a port of distinguished reputation for its trade with India: it may therefore not unreasonably be considered the goal of an expedition by sea. But it seems far more probable to me that the journey to Arabia Felix was usually not

made by a perilous voyage, but by land; for a road for caravans extended thither, and was not considered unsafe. Indeed, it appears that the latter route was the one taken by the queen of Sheba, for in 1 Kings x. 2 we read, "And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones." In the thirteenth verse of the same chapter she seems to have returned home the same way. But to prefer to such a land route the journey by sea, which was feared by Romans, Egyptians, and Arabians alike, in order to reach no other place than one which was the natural terminus of an overland march, is altogether too improbable. But against this it may be urged that it could not have been at all times practicable to effect a land journey through the dominions of independent Arabian tribes, and this only lends new weight to Quatremère's plea that Ophir could not have been in Arabia; for although the chief productions of that country have always been those spices which the queen of Sheba brought to Solomon, yet elephants have never been known to exist there, and gold has never been found in such abundance as to be an article of export. The ships of Ptolemy, in their commercial voyages, are never known to have touched at Arabia. And although in the Scripture narrative the accounts of the visit of the queen of the Sabæans and of the voyage to Ophir are in close connection, and suggest a mutual relation, yet the mere touching of Solomon's ships on the Arabian coast may have suggested this juxtaposition. The queen of Sheba's harbours may have sheltered the fleets of her powerful Hebrew neighbour before they struck out into the open sea, bound for India. Quatremère suggests that the voyage to Ophir may have been the cause or the result of the interview between the monarch of Israel and the Arabian princess.

The acceptance of the fact that the Phœnicians could by any possibility have had India as the terminus of their Ophir expedition, Quatremère seeks in every way to overthrow, although he cannot do away with the passage wherein Strabo (xvi. 757) says that the Phœnicians surpassed all other nations in navigation: he grants also that they were acquainted with the monsoons[1] at a time when the Egyptians had not

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumsk.* i. 1, p. 211; von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, i. p. 37.

a suspicion of their periodical occurrence; indeed, the latter only became acquainted with them in the first century of the Christian era through the statements of Hippalus, who was probably by no means their discoverer, but the first who made them available in the arts of navigation (see. *Periplus mar. Erythr.* p. 32; Plin. *H. N.* vi. 26). But Quatremère has mainly in his eye Ceylon, Sumatra, and Malacca; and whenever his thoughts revert to Barygaza, he has in view only the commerce which is described in the *Periplus*, and which was transacted a full thousand years subsequently to the expeditions to Ophir. Quatremère betrays no knowledge whatever of the gold lands on the Indus, and holds that the Ophir ships must have had to bring very different products from India than those which they did bring. In other words, he keeps in his mind the articles of luxury which were brought thence in the time when the *Periplus* was written, and when Greek drachmas and Roman gold coins had to be given in exchange; but he knows nothing of that primitive period of the Abhira where gold was a commodity little valued, and parted with for any trifling novelty. His great mistake is the endeavouring to interpret the occurrences of a rude primitive time by the light of a later and far more civilised period.

Quatremère grants, indeed, that the Phœnicians extended their commerce as far as to India, as is shown in the lament of Ezekiel (xxvii. 15). He does not admit, however, that it followed the course of the Red Sea, but the Persian Gulf, on which the Phœnicians had colonies[1] planted for the purpose of sustaining their Indian trade, and extending as far down as Maceta. The northern part of the Red Sea, he contends, was always considered very dangerous, and was shunned by the Romans and the Egyptians as much as possible. But even if this be so, yet it is evident that Solomon ventured upon its perilous waters, and Jehoshaphat after him. Besides, nothing is gained to the argument of Quatremère by this reasoning; for it is evident that the fleets of Hiram and Solomon had to take their course down the Red Sea, even if Zanguebar and not India were the goal of their expedition. And though it be granted that the Phœnicians were previously acquainted with the route to India by way of the Persian Gulf, they were

[1] *Mem. l.c.* xv. 364-368.

enabled by this latter course to discover a new way thither round the southern point of Arabia.

With Huetius, Montesquieu, D'Anville, Bruce, Rennell,[1] and other eminent observers, Quatremère seeks to locate Ophir in Sofala,—a site which Gesenius regarded as the most improbable of all, and which he did not think rested on evidence enough to entitle it to a formal and elaborate refutal. His reason for this lay unquestionably in the fanciful arguments which were brought forward by Bruce, and fully overthrown by the sound pleas of Vincent. The grounds taken by Quatremère are mostly of a negative character: he accepts Africa because he so decidedly rejects India; and he rejects India for reasons already alleged, which cannot be considered valid in view of the discoveries made by Lassen. The positive arguments which the distinguished French scholar throws into the scale, are the abundance of gold on the African coast, and the extended navigation of the Phœnicians towards the south. Both of these are not new; but they have of late been strengthened by investigations which can hardly be overlooked, and which claim some attention ere we close our investigation.

Gold, pleads Quatremère,[2] was the chief article brought back from Ophir,—a name which is distinctly and repeatedly used in the sacred narrative, evidently designating a place where there were rich mines of gold. But no country, prior to the discovery of America, yielded so much of this precious metal as Africa. The gold dust found there exists in a state of great purity: a simple process of washing clears it of the attendant sand. This article it was which excited the cupidity of the Phœnicians, and prompted them to make an alliance with Solomon, who could provide a harbour on the Red Sea for a common expedition in quest of gold. The commerce thus begun never ceased: after the downfall of the Phœnicians, the

[1] J. Rennell, *Geographical System of Herodotus, etc.*, 2d ed. London 1830, 8vo, vol. ii. p. 353. It is to be regretted that Rennell's work on Ophir (which he regards as Sofala), which appears to be a monograph, was not published by him. Is it not possible that among the literary remains of this great investigator this work may be found, and given to the world by his friends?

[2] *Mem. l.c.* T. xv. p. 370.

Romans renewed it, and the Byzantines continued it. I have alluded on a previous page to that curious method of trading which Cosmos describes, which occurred long subsequently to the reign of Solomon, and which was conducted by hanging trinkets on the bushes, the natives not being allowed to remove them till they had laid down gold dust enough to satisfy the greed of the merchants, who came from a distant land and were wholly unacquainted with their language. The same traffic was continued by the avaricious Arabs through the middle ages; they went as far as Madagascar even: and Masudi, who wrote in the tenth century (*Morondj.* MS. 598, fol. 1280), tells us that the coast of Sofala, near the boundary line of Zendj (Zingues, Zanguebar), was much visited by the ships of merchants of Oman and Siràf on the Persian Gulf. Edrisi confirms the same traffic (for Zaledj or Zonedj and Sofala, see Jaubert, i. p. 57 et seq.). The Portuguese repeat the story of the extensive gold trade of that coast, and tell us that when they landed there at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they found the traces of the former diggings. The proof of this extremely ancient traffic in gold Quatremère does not seek, like Bruce, in an Africo-Sabæan kingdom, nor in inscriptions on the stone structures of Sofala, nor in the Agisymba of Ptolemy, but in the Hebrew text of the book of Job (xxviii. 6), "The stones of it are the place of sapphires; and it hath dust[1] of gold." Quatremère, forgetting the gold sands of the Indus, insists that the expression "dust of gold" can only be used of Africa. And although no geographical localities are mentioned in this chapter of Job, but only God's praise and wondrous power are sung, yet the French scholar finds in it a strong confirmation of his theory.

With this, he thinks also that the three years which every expedition to Ophir consumed, admirably chimes: firstly, on account of the very long and difficult passage up and down the Red Sea, since the vessels could only sail by day and had to anchor at night; next, because of the voyage from the mouth of the Red Sea through the Indian Ocean, the monsoon only allowing them to go in one direction, and then detaining them there for six months, till it set back towards Asia; and lastly,

[1] Here Luther's and De Wette's translations differ from Michaelis', Quatremère's, and the English established version, in the use of the words "clumps of gold" instead of "dust of gold."—ED.

on account of the necessity of landing frequently on the African coast, and of conducting a very slow and protracted kind of trade with the natives.

Quatremère thinks that the probability of this long voyage by Phœnician sailors to the African coast is confirmed by Herodotus' well-known account of their circumnavigation of the whole continent; but he does not go to either of the two extremes into which most fall: a part denying Herodotus' story altogether, and a part going even beyond him, and granting that the voyage which he reports was merely the commencement of a series which served to link Ælа on the Red Sea with Tarshish or Tartessus in Spain, Carthage on the northern African coast, and Phœnicia herself, and keep up continued mercantile exchanges between these widely separated ports. It is very probable, in the opinion of Quatremère, that neither view is correct, but that the great difficulties encountered by Necho's expedition in their successful voyage round the Cape, were so great as effectually to check subsequent efforts to repeat the romantic attempt.

The objection urged by Gosselin, that it was impossible to make such a voyage in ships of so slight a character and without any compass, is well disposed of by Quatremère's statement, that in such cases courage supplies the place of limited advantages: he shows how this was so with the Northmen, who with equally scanty appliances were able to traverse the broad tracts lying between their native Denmark and the distant Greenland, and the yet more distant Vineland; and with the Malays[1] no less, who with mere boats explored the whole South Sea and the Indian Ocean as far as Madagascar. The boldness of the Phœnicians is revealed in their colonizing places as remote as Tartessus and Gades, and in sending fleets to Cornwall and the Baltic for tin and amber; and why, asks Quatremère, should not such a race extend their voyages to the African coast in quest of gold and ivory? Strabo tells us that the Tyrians founded three hundred cities on the west shore of Africa (Strabo, xvii. 826), which were destroyed by the Pharusians and the Nigrites. Even if these were hardly worthy to bear the name of cities, if they were only trading settlements, they

[1] Compare E. Dulaurier, *Etudes*, *l.c. Journ. Asiat.* T. viii. 1846, pp. 142–145.

presuppose the occupation of a long extent of coast, for it would be fatal to their interests to crowd these too near together. The Phœnicians may fairly be supposed, then, to have peopled the shore as far southward as Guinea. And, continues Quatremère, were Africa the site of the ancient Ophir, with the large district on the eastern coast already known to the Phœnicians, the voyage round the Cape would not appear to be an extraordinary exploit; and all the less so, from that singular configuration of the shore to which Rennell[1] has called attention, which leads an explorer naturally on from step to step, there being no great headlands to check his onward course. Pharaoh Necho only made use of the knowledge which the Phœnicians had possessed before, and Herodotus merely inserted in the annals of the world's history facts which had once been familiar, but which had passed out of view. Quatremère follows out the development of this train of remark with many very instructive comments, which, however, I cannot follow. I would express my regret, however, that more full details of that second great water expedition of antiquity—worthy to stand, as it is, by the side of that first great one of Solomon to Ophir—have not been recorded in the annals of that remote past time, and that we have lost a singularly interesting chapter from the history of the world.

I close the discursion with the question, Whether, on the grounds which have been alleged above, the boldness and skill of the Phœnician sailors, the directors of Solomon's fleet, are not just as valid if India be made the object of the expedition as southern Africa? The gold dust referred to by Job may just as well indicate that collected by the Abhira on the Indus as that of Sofala. The Phœnicians were unquestionably familiar with the Persian Gulf long before they had touched the African coast. No testimony but that of Tyrian writers could fully enlighten us, and all traces of their records have disappeared, to the great loss of our knowledge of ancient history; but what evidence there is, substantiates the accomplishment by Solomon, a thousand years before the advent of Christ, of what Pharaoh attempted centuries afterwards,—namely, the successful use of Phœnician skill to reach the land of gold. Five hundred

[1] Rennell, *Geographical System of Herodotus*, 2d. ed. London 1830, 8vo, c. xxiv. and xxv. pp. 348-408.

years later, Alexander the Great endeavoured to reach the same golden Ophir, and he too did not neglect to use the same accomplished auxiliaries. Phœnician pilots, steersmen, and sailors, accompanied him as he left Babylon to conquer India.

The question where Ophir lay, is one that cannot be definitely settled in the absence of the annals left by the historians of Tyre and Sidon. The problem will always be an open one; and the riddle will not be the less perplexing if we adhere to such a solution as may be afforded by the first mention of the word Ophir in the Bible (Gen. x. 29), where, as the possession of the sons of Joktan, it seems to be in the southern part of Arabia. Nor is it solved by the adoption of the new, and to me unsatisfactory, conjecture of von Bohlen,[1] that Sheba (Saba) and Ophir were Indian colonies and trading-places, and that the Sabæans were Indian merchants like the Banjans of the present day.

[1] Von Bohlen, in *den Schriften der deutschen Gesellschaft zu Königsberg*, Pt. i. p. 107; the same in *Genesis*, Königs. 1835, p. 125, zu Gen. x. 7; and *Nachtrag*, pp. 492-496. *Vid.* Lengerke, *Kenaan*, Pt. i. p. 286.

CHAPTER IV.

SEC. 8. THE SINAI PENINSULA FROM ITS SOUTHERN SIDE, ROUND BY THE GULF OF SUEZ, EL-TOR, AND THE ROUTES THENCE TO SINAI.

DISCURSION I.

TUR OR ET-TOR, WITH ITS HARBOUR AND COAST—THE DATE GARDENS OF EL-WADI AND THE WARM BATHS HAMAM MUSA, THE ELIM OF THE MONKS.

THE most important harbour of the Sinai Peninsula, and almost the only one which is regularly visited, and the only one without exception which has always continued to be a settled place, is et-Tor or Tur, on the south-west coast. It was first made the subject of careful observation by Don Juan de Castro in 1541, whose delineation of the shore was followed at a later period by D'Anville.[1] It was, however, from a very remote period the landing-place of pilgrims on their way to visit the sacred localities of the Peninsula, and has always been the most convenient point for entering the country to travellers who choose a sea route in preference to a land one. In consequence of its settled though not large population, it has always been able to supply the wants of European travellers in a more satisfactory manner than any other place in the country could, and is therefore an agreeable spot for them to tarry at, if they choose to do so. The result is, that we are better acquainted with its immediate vicinity, and with the routes thence to Mount Sinai, than with any other part of the Peninsula.

Niebuhr is the first traveller whose observations have been characterized by great closeness and fulness; and even in the matter of determining its latitude, he was so singularly correct

[1] D'Anville, *Descrip. du Golfe Arabique, ou de la Mer Rouge*, Paris 1766, p. 237.

that even Ruppell, who followed him after an interim of sixty-four years, and who was one of the most exact of observers, was able to confirm Niebuhr's result (28° 12′) to a nicety.

But there were some points which Niebuhr in his brief stay at Tor was able to explore exhaustively, particularly the coast of that tongue of land which runs southward, just above the harbour, and shuts in a little minor haven just north of the town. Of the various villages or settlements which have been at times more or less remote the habitations of man, we have, reckoning from north to south, first the old convent, then the little hamlet of Shadlic, then the Christian village Belled Nassara, opposite to which is the place where vessels lie at anchor; then Kalla et Tor, the old fortress, with the roadstead lying just before it; then the palm plantations, with the bir or wells which water them; and lastly, farthest to the south, the village of Jebel.

The earliest history of Tor is little known: it is very probable, however, that it was a place where tribute was received from pilgrims, and that as such it supplanted Kolsum, at the head of the Gulf of Suez, during the sway of the Egyptian sultans. It was in the neighbourhood of the ancient Phœnicon, and would seem to have been used from a remote period as a harbour and as a place for pearl fishery. At a later period it may have become the most available point for Sinai pilgrims to land at; made the more so in consequence of the settlement of hermits in the hollows of the rocks near by, traces of whose habitations have been recently fully brought to light by Wellsted. The abundance of springs both at Tor and in the neighbouring mountains would be another weighty reason for establishing a monastery and a hospitium for the entertainment of pilgrims; and the ruins of such buildings are still to be traced among the date thickets, and in the monks' legends bear the names Raithu (*Παϊθοῦ*) and Elim. It is now well known, however, that these terms were applied by Cosmas Indicopleustes and Antoninus Martyr, prior to the overrunning of the country by Arabs, to the district north of Wadi Feiran and Serbal. But as these names passed away from any connection with the conventual establishments and the city of Feiran, which Antoninus found in a state of prosperity, and afterwards reappeared in connection with the port and ecclesiastical buildings of Tor, their use by the

monks would seem to carry us back to the primitive settlement of the Peninsula by Christians. We have no proof of this, however, for we only know Tor in the time of its downfall; and what hints we can obtain are obtained from a comparison of the account which Niebuhr has left us of his visit in 1762, with that which Thevenot communicated a little more than a century earlier.

Niebuhr,[1] who arrived at Tor on the 11th of October, after a passage of three days' duration after leaving Suez, in which he was in great peril from the coral reefs which abound along the shores of the Red Sea, cast anchor in the harbour at nearly seven fathoms of water. At the outermost sunken ledge there was a rough beacon of rocks to serve as a warning to mariners. The breadth of the gulf at that point seemed to him to be from twenty-five to thirty miles; the general direction of the shore to be south-south-east, or south-east by south. The mountain chain which had followed the coast from Hammam Faroun down, here withdrew a few miles inland, but south of Tor again approached the sea. This afforded the view of a continuous plain from Tor as far southward as Ras Mohammed. From his vessel he could descry in the interior the summit of Mount St Catherine towering above all the rest. The localities in the immediate neighbourhood of the harbour Niebuhr names as follows: 1. Kalla et Tor, formerly a fortress, now a complete ruin; 2. Belled en Nassara, the village of the Christians, inhabited entirely by Greeks, and in whose immediate neighbourhood are the ruins of a convent—the site, according to the monks, of the scriptural Elim; 3. Shadlic, a fishing village hard by; 4. Bir, the wells, whence the vessels that touch at Tor procure water, better in quality than that of Suez, but far inferior to that which is brought down by camels from the mountain springs not far away. The village of Jebel, still farther to the south, is very small, and is the home of the pilots who conduct the scanty navigation of that part of the Red Sea.

Thevenot,[2] who was there in 1658, a little more than a century before Niebuhr, did not pay much attention to Tor, it seeming to him an insignificant place. He alludes, however,

[1] Niebuhr's *Reisen*, I. pp. 259, 260. [There is an excellent English translation.]

[2] J. Thevenot, *Reisen*, Pt. i. vol. 2, Kap. xxiv. p. 224.

to a fortress standing near the sea, whose walls were well guarded with towers and even with cannon, and garrisoned by a detachment of Turkish soldiers under an aga. Near this fortress there was a Greek convent, dedicated to St Catherine and Jehovah in the burning bush. Near by were five or six houses inhabited by Greeks. Thevenot received a very cordial reception at the convent, and had set before him a fine dish of fish from the Red Sea. At that time there were thirty monks there, the most of whom had been compelled to leave the convent at Sinai out of considerations of safety, Tor being regarded as more secure against Arab attacks.

During the time of the French occupation of Egypt, Coutelle and Rozière the mineralogists made an overland visit to Tor, and gave a detailed account of the results of their observations, which may be found in their *Description de l'Egypte état moderne*, T. ii. pp. 283–285. They confirm the accounts given by their predecessors of the dangerous coral reefs along the shore. The tide, which at Suez rises to a height of from four to six feet, they found to rise at Tor scarcely thirty inches. They ascribe the decadence of the place not so much to the faithlessness of the Turkish and Arab authorities, as to the wicked recklessness of the pilots of the port, who do not exercise care to bring the vessels committed to them safely to their destination, but procure their wreck upon the coast in order that large spoils may come to them.

Seetzen[1] visited Tor in 1810 at the time of the date harvest, and saw the place thickly filled with people who had been called together from all the neighbourhood to share in the fruit. The most remarkable event during his stay was his visit to the mountain el-Nakûs in the neighbourhood, which had excited so much wonder and curiosity by the strange sounds which were said to come from it. Seetzen does not appear to have tarried long in Tor proper, but to have made his stay mainly in the Wadi el Nachal, an hour's march northward. This is the place which Burckhardt afterwards designated simply as el-Wadi, and lies on the road from Tor to Wadi Hebran.

It was in this retired place, too, that Burckhardt tarried for several weeks after his return, much broken in health, from

[1] Seetzen, *Schreiben von Mocha*, 17th Nov. 1810, in *Monatl. Correspond.* 1812, vol. xxvi. p. 393.

Medina. He had been three days in coming from Sherm; and when on the third day he arrived at Tor, he found the place in the possession of the wife of the Pasha of Egypt, and her great retinue. Lively as this made the place, it did not adapt it as an especially favourable one for the recovery of a sick man; and after enduring it as well as he could for a few days, he withdrew to the seclusion of el-Wadi, where there were some palm trees, an abundance of fresh air, and the isolation which he craved. It may be remarked incidentally, that when the Egyptian princess left Tor for Cairo, a carriage with four horses was sent thither by her husband,—the only instance in the history of the world, it may be, when so sumptuous a means of conveyance has been witnessed upon the Sinai Peninsula.

Surrounded by palm, nebek, orange, and apricot trees, in a little cottage, which Burckhardt shielded from the hot rays of the sun by a matting of thick date leaves, he rapidly recovered, and was able to renew his journey northward. He says that he had not found so sumptuous a place to tarry and recuperate his strength, which had been severely taxed by the efforts of four years in the wastes of Syria and Arabia, since leaving the villas of his friends in Aleppo. And he recommends it as a very favourable place for any one who may need the salubrious influences of such a locality while travelling through that region, to resort thither. The warm springs of Hammam Musa, thought by the Arabs to signalize the spot where Moses lived for many years, are used largely by the inhabitants for their medicinal effects. Their waters are moderately warm, about 28° Reaum. There is a fort in el-Wadi, which Burckhardt conjectured to be of the same antiquity with that at Tor. The former, which was near the cottage where Burckhardt lived, has so excellent natural advantages, that the French, during the time of their occupation of Egypt, entertained the project of reconstructing it, and holding it as a strong position. They were compelled to leave the country, however, before it could be carried into effect.

Burckhardt speaks very strongly of the great abundance of the dates produced in and around Tor. "Nowhere else," says the experienced traveller, "have I seen such luxuriant date plantations as those here." More difficult was it, however, to procure meat; for sheep are very scarce in the Peninsula, and

the Arabs are very reluctant to part with them. The mutton for the Egyptian princess had to be brought down to Tor from Suez.

After recovering his strength, Burckhardt continued his journey northward. His course took him soon out of the Wadi el-Wadi, as it is called *par eminence*, to a high plain bounded on the east by the long range of Sinaitic mountains, and on the west by the low chalk and limestone hills which skirt the coast. This plain is for the most part gravelly and very hard. Its name is el-Kaa, and it does not stand in good repute with the Arabs, so poorly supplied is it with springs. On this open plain, very little sheltered with trees, Burckhardt suffered much, and at the end of his first day's march was attacked with fever, which followed him all the way to Suez, and left him little strength or inclination to take observations of the remainder of the route.

The most elaborate reports of Tor and its vicinity are from the pen of Ruppell,[1] who visited it in his first journey to Sinai, extending from 1822 to 1827, and also in his second, which was from 1831 to 1835, and of Ehrenberg,[2] who was there between 1823 and 1825. They have studied exhaustively the natural productions and the physical characteristics of the whole coast; and their works have received so signal marks of approbation, that I need but make a passing allusion to them, and refer the reader who wishes to pursue the subject in detail to their classic volumes.

Ruppell's remarks, made in connection with his visit to Tor, on some of the physical characteristics of the whole Peninsula, are so valuable that I cite them here.

The climate of the country is in general very healthful, and free from febrile influences, a few low places like Tor excepted. The different forms of dysentery so common in other lands are not met here; yet there were some of the natives whom he saw

[1] E. Ruppell, *Karte des Hafens von Tor, aufgenommen* 1826; *Reise in Abyssin.* Frank. a. M. 1838; *Lettre*, dat. 23d April 1826, in von Zach's *Correspond. astronomique*, Gènes 1826, vol. xv. No. 1, p. 28.

[2] C. G. Ehrenberg, *die Corallenthiere des Rothen Meeres, physiologisch untersucht und systematisch verzeichnet*, in *Schriften der Akademie d. Wissensch. im Berlin*, 1834; the same, *über die Natur und Bildung der Coralleninseln und Corallenbänke im Rothen Meere*, in the same work; the same, *Symbolæ physicæ, etc.*

suffering with this complaint, but not, he thinks, from any evil in the climate, but from insufficient and improper food, inadequate clothing, and the sudden changes of temperature to which the country is exposed. The latter arise largely from the abrupt transitions, occurring as they do almost daily on the coast, of the course of the wind from northerly to southerly currents. In the mountainous districts the nights are almost always cold; in February water not unfrequently freezes in the convent garden at Sinai: on the contrary, the sandy valleys, like those near Tor, are intensely hot in summer, partly in consequence of the unclouded sky, partly from the glare of the rocks, partly from the radiation of the sand.

Diseases of the eyes, so common in the East, are unfrequent and of short duration in the Peninsula, because that sudden draught of cold air which is so often encountered in Egypt is not known in Arabia. There is a species of ophthalmia largely prevalent among the Arabs, but it is a mere temporary inflammation of the eye. The small-pox is a great scourge here, as everywhere in the East, though the Christians of Tor have introduced vaccination.

Those who wish to learn in detail what the botanical character of the neighbourhood of Tor is, will consult the *Travels*[1] of the accomplished and enthusiastic Schubert.

The peculiar province which Ehrenberg explored and exhausted is one to which I can only refer here. He spent a half-year in examining the corals and the infusoria of the Red Sea, and his work contains the record of his thorough investigations along the whole western coast of the Peninsula. The contrast is very great between the accumulated stores which my distinguished co-labourer in the University of Berlin brought back with him, and those which another eminent man, the Italian Pietro Della Valle,[2] scarcely less honoured in his day than Ehrenberg in ours, brought back in 1616. Della Valle says that in Tor he "hired a boat and went out to fish for the corals and oysters in the harbour. Four whole chests he sent home to Italy, as a remembrance of his journey, and as a suitable means of decorating a beautiful grotto at home."

[1] Von Schubert, *Reisen in das Morgenland.*

[2] Pietro Della Valle, *Reisebeschreibung bei Wiederhold*, 1674, fol., *Sendschreiben* xi. dat. 25 Jan. 1616, p. 121.

As the second part of Ehrenberg's journal has not been published, I will avail myself of the manuscript to extract the names of the harbours along the western coast of the Peninsula, all of which he examined carefully, and with an eye to the wants of future navigators. The list includes, reckoning from Suez to Tor, twenty-eight names, of which only ten are indicated on Moresby's English chart, and those mostly in a false orthography. Those in italics indicate the most prominent harbours, suitable for large ships.

1. *Suez.* There is good anchorage close to the town for small craft, and the roads outside are suitable for larger vessels, excepting during the prevalence of strong gales from the south. The depth of water in the harbour varies from one to three fathoms; at ebb tide in summer there is but one, at high water in winter there are three. The greatest depth in the roads is eight or nine fathoms. From Suez to Tor the depth of the sea along the coast ranges from fifteen to thirty. 2. Ajun, opposite Ajun Musa. 3. Mesalbäht. 4. Sadder. 5. *Matamar.* 6. Chor Debba. 7. El-Haraba. 8. Lagai. 9. Seffaje. 10. *El-Hamam*, opposite Hamam. Faroun, or Pharaoh's Baths, where at high tide there are sometimes forty-five fathoms of water. 11. Grundela, probably opposite Gharundel. 12. El-Benkie. 13. Haluk el Guareb. 14. *Abu Selime*, where Lepsius' vessel waited for him. 15. Betran. 16. Bir-tehi. 17. Abu-rasifa. 18. Negasaht. 19. Shera-tibh. 20. Shaeb el Gaza, the only one which affords a thorough protection against southern gales. This is secured by a coral reef which runs out into the sea on the south. There are four fathoms of water in this harbour. 21. Djeben. 22. Abu-darbe. 23. Guta el Gaza. 24. El-Bitan: here whales have been seen. 25. El-Quas. 26. El-Ghub. 27. Abu Suared. 28. *Tor.* This harbour, though open at the south, is effectually guarded against the strong west winds by the tongue of land which runs down from the north.

From Tor to Ras Mohammed there are, according to Ehrenberg, fifteen places suitable for the anchorage of light craft. Only six of them are important enough to have any recognition on Moresby's chart, which was followed by Kiepert in his map to accompany Robinson's *Biblical Researches.*

Tor has been visited within recent years by Wellsted, von Schubert, and Lepsius.

The first named, who devotes six pages to an account of Tor, repeats much which has already been alluded to. He tells us that he found the older of the Arabian settlements completely deserted, and that at the Christian village of Belled en Nassara there was a scanty population, which subsisted mainly on the slight returns made by bringing water from the mountains, fishing, and procuring naphtha or coal oil from the Egyptian coast opposite, but whose poverty was really extreme. He confirms the accounts which Pococke[1] gave of the marshy and sticky character of the soil around Tor, which made it preferable to leave the place and go to the high land in the rear, as Burckhardt had done. Von Schubert and Lepsius both confirm the squalid and filthy character of the scanty population. An English commercial agent was residing there during their visit: he set an excellent dish of fish before them, which they could not eat in the house, but enjoyed in their own tents, where the vermin did not destroy their appetite. Lepsius remarks that it was pleasant in that inhospitable little town to meet a friendly reception from a man who had been cicerone to Ruppell, Ehrenberg, and Laborde.

Wellsted's observations led him to conclude that there is no foundation for the apparently modern legend that Tor was the Elim of the Israelites.

Those who may wish to pursue the subject into further detail, will find allusions more or less full to all the productions, vegetable and animal, of Tor, in the writers already alluded to, and in the narratives of Laborde,[2] Shaw, and Henniker.

DISCURSION II.

JEBEL HIMAM, OR MOKATTEB, AND JEBEL NAKÛS.

There remain yet two notable localities in the neighbourhood of Tor to be spoken of: the one bearing the united names of Jebel Mokatteb, or Mountain of Inscriptions, and Jebel Himam, or Mount of Death; and the other known as Jebel Nakûs, or Bell Mountain, the latter of which has within recent

[1] Pococke's *Description of the East*, quoted from a Ger. trans.

[2] L. de Laborde, *Voy.* p. 66; Wellsted's *Travels;* Th. Shaw, *Travels;* Sir F. Henniker, *Notes during a Visit to Egypt, Sinai, etc.*

years awakened much interest in travellers. A story was told to Bernardus de Breydenbach,[1] Dean of Mayence, who visited this region in 1483, that there was once in the secluded district north of Tor a convent of monks, which had utterly disappeared, leaving not a trace behind, except the regular sound of the bells at the canonical hours of every day. The Arabs confirmed this story, originally reported by the monks, but they professed to have lost the way to the sacred place. Since that time the sound of bells has frequently been observed, but the source has not been traced till very recently. It is now ascertained, however, to be one of the two mountains alluded to above, both of which lie near together north-west of Tor.

Wellsted is not only the discoverer of the first named of the two, but thus far the only explorer; for Lepsius, although in the immediate neighbourhood, failed to visit the spot. Jebel Mokatteb is the first eminence of any importance as one follows the low range of hills leading northward along the coast above Tor. Comparing it with the descriptions which characterize Wadi Feiran and Wadi Mokatteb near Serbal, this mountain near Tor has little importance, but the lines found upon it have a common character with the other mysterious inscriptions of the Peninsula, although there are fewer letters and more figures than in those of the north. Unfortunately, Wellsted took no copies; but Rödiger, who is so profoundly skilled in oriental scholarship, is of the opinion just advanced, that the inscriptions of this mountain are coeval with the other mysterious inscriptions of the country, notwithstanding the comparatively greater number of words in known modern languages which are found scattered among them. The whole mountain is extremely dreary and barren, and with the Arabs it has the reputation of being haunted by evil spirits. Wellsted's attendants could not be induced to spend the night there.

The Bell Mountain lies a little farther north in the same range of hills. Burckhardt heard of it from the monks at Sinai, but never visited it. The mystery which formerly hung over it is entirely dispelled by the investigations of the intelligent travellers who have visited it, among whom are Wellsted, Ruppell, Ehrenberg, and Prof. Gray of Oxford. The old legend was, that a convent had once been swallowed up by some

[1] Bernh. de Breydenbach, *Itinerarium*, Prefat. 5.

convulsion of nature, and that the bells never ceased to ring at their appointed time. But Wellsted instantly discovered that the sound is formed merely by the falling of particles of sand down the side. He proved the accuracy of his conjecture by running down the sides at a rapid pace: the sound then was startlingly loud, and would have filled even him with terror had he not known whence is its source. He afterwards tried the same experiment after rain, but this time there was no sound.

Ruppell, Gray, and Ehrenberg were led to the same results; and the old mystery which hung over the Bell Mountain may now be said to be entirely removed.

NOTE *on the Distribution of the Coral Reefs and Islands in the Red Sea, particularly along the Coast of the Sinai Peninsula.*

1. *General View of the Subject.*

When Thomas Shaw[1] visited the Peninsula in 1721, he made the remark that the great deficiency of the country in vegetation is richly compensated by the abundance of the marine growth along the shores, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the harbour of Tor. He was much struck with the profusion of madrepores and algæ on the coast (for he held with the naturalists of that day that corals are a species of plants), and tells us that he was inclined to adopt the notion of Pliny, that all this luxuriance of vegetation is to be regarded and described as a submarine forest (Plin. xiii. 25, *rubrum scil. mare enim et totus orientis oceanus refertes est sylvis*). Père Sicard[2] spoke of the coral reefs as petrified mushrooms, but remarked particularly on the resemblance which the algæ bear to fir trees, and in some of the varieties to oaks.

Forskal, who accompanied Niebuhr on his expedition, observes in his *Descriptio Animalium*, that at the time of their visit a skilled naturalist could make more discoveries in a single day on the coral reefs of the Red Sea than anywhere else in a whole year. Here, he says, the occupation becomes one of no

[1] Thos. Shaw's *Travels*. Ritter quotes from a Ger. trans.

[2] Père Sicard, *Lettre au Père Florien*, in *Lettres édifiantes*, edit. Lyon 1819, vol. iv. p. 404.

little art, for it is as much as one's life is worth to let a boat be carried to the shoal places. These, however, are easily distinguishable, says Forskal, by reason of their light colour; and they afford in time of perfect calm the greatest contrast in the extremely rich variety of submarine vegetation to the wild, haggard wastes of the adjacent shores. Forskal's observations on the different species were accurate as far as they extended, but later naturalists have enlarged them very much. Yet this remark of Forskal's deserves to be quoted[1] on account of its truth: "The coral reefs reach from Tor as far as Ghonsada (Gomsude), following the line of the shore; but farther south they become rarer, so that vessels can sail in the night, while on the coast of Suez they are wholly wanting."

Ehrenberg confirms the general truth of the sentence just quoted, but his general labours have extended far beyond any of his predecessors in this field. He has with great sagacity and thoroughness made out the differences between the flora of the Arabian Gulf and that of the Pacific, which the departed Chamisso and others so fully explored and described; and the result of his own personal inquiries has been to make the world[2] fully acquainted with the vegetable life of the Red Sea, and to contribute thereby a most important chapter to the history of natural science in the present day. I must refer the reader to Ehrenberg's works if he wishes to master the subject: it will be sufficient for my purpose to allude to them so far as they relate to the geographical character of the Peninsula.

2. *The Distribution of the Coral Banks in the Red Sea.*

The Red Sea, in strong contrast to the North, the Baltic, the Adriatic, and the Atlantic Ocean, is characterized by the abundance of its coral reefs, which in many places gird the shore in the form of banks, which come almost to the surface in some places. They are generally encountered in places where the water is shoal, but they are met in some instances where the depth is not inconsiderable, and are there most formidable.

[1] Forskal's *Descript. Animal.* p. 29.

[2] C. G. Ehrenberg, *Ueber die Natur und Bildung der Coralleninseln und Corallenbänke im Rothen Meere*, Berlin 1834; the same, *die Corallenthiere des Rothen Meeres*, Berlin 1834.

There are in the Red Sea, from the place where the reefs begin to appear to the place where they cease, very few localities where they cease to such a degree as to open a harbour for free anchorage close to the shore. These are Suez, Tor, and Jambo. In the reef district the banks run along close to the coast, generally submerged a very little way, but making it necessary for boats to touch at the outer edge, and for the passengers to wade ashore over the reef, or to be carried on the backs of the sailors. There comes then open water, generally not very deep, but available for steamers; and then there rise up from the bottom another long and broken series of reefs, shutting in what may be likened to a canal. Then comes another line of water, then another reef formation; and in some places these alternate patches of free water and of coral extend half-way across from the Arabian to the African shore. Of course these reefs are a help to navigation in one way, for they break the violence of the waves, and in case of a storm a steamer or a sailing vessel can lie at anchor behind one with security; but when the currents and the winds become, as they sometimes do, uncontrollably strong, the peril is all the more heightened, for should the vessel drag its anchor, and dash against the reef, it would soon go to pieces. From Tor to Gomsude the coral formation is most abundant; north of Tor it disappears almost entirely; south of Gomsude it is rarely met.

The lower part of the Red Sea is shallow, and the waves are usually not high; the middle portion is very deep, and the waves are formidable. Ehrenberg tells us that on the seas which he had traversed—the Adriatic, the Black, the Mediterranean, the Caspian, the North, and the Baltic—he never beheld such waves as at the deepest parts of the Red Sea,—the locality between Sherm and Ras Mohammed, for example.

3. *The existence of the Coral Reefs traceable to causes connected with Primeval Volcanic Action.*

The most of the coral banks and islands are found where the waters of the Red Sea are shallow; and they never appear where the depth is great. It is noticeable also that they appear in the neighbourhood of flat coasts, and such also as bear traces of former volcanic action. The Gulf of Suez, near whose mouth the greatest abundance of coral is seen, is remark-

able for its shallowness: no portion of it is at all deep; fifty fathoms form the maximum.

The existence of a mountain exuding naphtha, just opposite to Tor, with its adjacent warm springs, was considered at an early date a probable reason for conjecturing that volcanic action has something to do, directly or indirectly, with the formation of coral reefs. This Leopold von Buch[1] long ago suspected, with his usual remarkable acuteness; and in his classical work on the Canaries he called attention to the traces of former volcanic activity on the Arabian coast. The results to which Ehrenberg was led are convincingly in favour of such a theory; and the observations of Lieut. Barker,[2] who witnessed a display of that activity in Suddh Island in August 1846, has left no ground for debating the question. Not that the nature of the ground has any influence in promoting the development of the little creatures which make up the substance of the banks, but the shallowness of the waters, which is a secondary cause of the reefs, doubtless owing to a volcanic upheaval of the bottom of the sea.

4. *Characteristic Features of the Coral Reefs.*

The coral reefs of the Red Sea have this feature in common, that they all form a kind of bank coming very nearly to the surface, and running out below with the most diversified prongs. The top is usually one or two fathoms below the water; but at ebb tide points appear, which, however, are never pure coral in their nature, but are black masses of mingled shells, sea-weed, and bits of rock, cemented together and upborne by the underlying reef. The sailors call these points negro heads.

The ring form, so common in the Pacific, is never met in the Red Sea; and there are none of those regularities of construction which have been noticed in Australasia by Beechey, Darwin, and Gaimard, observable in the Suez Gulf, excepting that on the side towards the prevailing wind—the north—the sea is always sure to be found tolerably deep. The characteristic form is band-like, girding the shore, as has already been said, with a number of coral strips, not connected, but usually

[1] L. von Buch, *Descript. physique des Isles Canaries, etc.*, Paris 1836.

[2] In *Lond. Journ.* of the *Roy. Geog. Soc.* xvi. 1846, p. 338.

broken, and particularly in the outer ones. Those which lie close to the shore have a bold front on the sea side. Those which come after slope away both to the east and the west, and are more dangerous. The channels which are left between them are thoroughly understood by the pilots, and afford for small steamers and for the smaller class of sailing vessels a secure and admirable basin, free from heavy waves, and allowing therefore more rapid progress than could be enjoyed on the open sea.

The harbour of Tor is formed by a coral reef which projects southward in the form of a long tongue-like peninsula, and which is so massive that Père Sicard pleasantly says, that "it is a mole such as not all the European powers combined would be able to construct." Its appearance is known not to have changed perceptibly during the last hundred and fifty years, and has apparently undergone no alteration for three centuries. It is always four feet, and during the flood tides of summer it is sometimes twelve feet, under water. The harbour which it forms has a depth of eight or nine fathoms. The reef is three times as long as it is broad, and on the outside falls away suddenly to a depth of fifty fathoms.[1]

DISCURSION III.

THE ROUTE ACROSS THE PLAIN EL-KAA AND THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS FROM TOR TO SINAI.

1. *The Plain Wadi Hebran, and the Pass to Wadi Selâf.*

Tor was the ancient landing-place of many pilgrims to Sinai, Christian as well as Mohammedan, for it was equally sacred to both confessions. There are therefore several *Itineraria* in our possession left by former travellers, but they are, for geographical purposes, of little value. Niebuhr, Seetzen, Rozière, Coutelle, Burckhardt, Robinson, Callier, and others, took different routes to Sinai. But able travellers have explored the one from Tor through Wadi Hebran; and those

[1] The reader who may wish to read a full account of the various reasons which have been assigned for the name Red Sea, will consult Ritter's *Erdkunde von Arabien* (the extra-Sinai portion), xiii. 252–257.

who wish to study the subject in all its bearings will find in the writings referred to all that they can wish. Ruppell described[1] it mainly in its geological characteristics. Schimper traced[2] the botanical features of the route. Laborde sketched[3] the topographical nature of the country when on his return from Sinai; and though his sketch is a slight one, yet there is enough to enable us to form a judgment. Von Schubert has given[4] us a very graphic description of the route, which cannot be read without transporting one to the very spot. Wellsted has confirmed,[5] and Lepsius[6] has crowned the whole with his careful examination of the inscriptions on the route, and with his measurements of angles with the compass.

The word Kaa means merely "plain," and el-Kaa is preeminently "the plain." It reaches northward from Tor to Abu Selime, where Wadi Mokatteb in its western portion comes down to the sea, and consists for the most part of a very gently sloping plateau of sand, whose highest portion is only three hundred and forty feet above the sea's level. It is broken here and there with slightly rolling hills, and is bounded on the east by the towering granite region of the Peninsula, and on the west by the long chalk and limestone range to which Jebel Mokatteb and Jebel Nakûs, already described, belong. The plain is approached on the south by the hillock over which el-Wadi runs, and the eye runs at a glance northward to the high hills beyond Wadi Selime, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Wadi Gharundel. The theory has been advanced by Shaw, that the Elim of the Israelites was in the neighbourhood of Tor; but this would seem to be thoroughly disproved by the fact that between the wells of Tor and the bitter fountain of Murkha, or Murrah, at the western outlet of the Wadi Mokatteb route to Sinai—a three days' march—there is not a single spring. The vegetation of the plain is very scanty, and the soil is in many cases covered with a thin crust of salt.

[1] Ruppell, *Reise in Abyssin.* Frankf. a. M. 1838; vol. i. pp. 114–117.

[2] W. Schimper, *Kurze Nachrichten*, in MS. dat. 1835.

[3] L. de Laborde et Linant, *Voy. de l'Arabie Petree*, 1830, Paris, *l.c.* pp. 64–66, in *Relevé topographique de Ouâdi Hebran.*

[4] Von Schubert, *Reise in das Morgenland*, Pt. ii. pp. 299–307.

[5] Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, 1838, 8vo, vol. ii. pp. 45–56.

[6] R. Lepsius, *Journal*, in MS. 1485.

The route to Wadi Hebran does not run parallel with the sea and then turn sharply to the east, but crosses the lower part of the plain obliquely, in an almost northerly direction. It is a day's march from Tor to the mouth of the wadi, although to the sea it seems but a very little way. Travellers almost always spend the first night at the place where the narrow opening in the rocks tells them that they have reached Wadi Hebran. Lepsius' practised eye showed him that there might be expected Sinaitic inscriptions on rocks so well adapted for them. Nor was he disappointed; and the result of his search was the discovery of ten of those mysterious records, similar in their general character to those found elsewhere in the Peninsula, but entirely illegible. He concluded that they must have been left there by persons on the way from Tor to Sinai: the general direction of the inscriptions indicated this. They could not, however, have been cut with the simple tools which were required to engrave the inscriptions on the sandstones of Wadi Mokatteb. They must have been done by skilled hands, and with instruments of a fine edge.

And this naturally brings us to speak of the geological character of the region. The Wadi Hebran leads directly into the granitic or syenitic region. The rock, which is at first largely felspathic with crystals of quartz, becomes more and more mixed with hornblende, and at length passes into the fine, pure granite of Mount Sinai. Wadi Hebran is plainly the result of an early disruption of the primitive rock, and leads upwards from el-Kaa between high ledges of rock in a more winding manner than would be conjectured from the map of Laborde. It throws off a few minor wadis to the right and the left, one of which the last-mentioned traveller explored, and found to be very difficult to traverse, indeed inaccessible to camels. In one of these Laborde discovered more inscriptions, and the secluded ruins of one of those many monasteries which in former days were so common throughout the entire neighbourhood of the holy mountain.

Wadi Hebran is at first very narrow, scarcely twenty paces wide: it then becomes broader, and then narrows again. A little brook flows down through it and waters a number of palm trees, and gives rise to an abundant vegetation. Indeed, all travellers speak of the delightful transition from the sterile,

savage face of the plain of el-Kaa, to the well-watered trees and plants which abound in the Wadi Schubert. Lepsius and others allude specifically to the form of the place; but as it is not particularly different from that met elsewhere, I will not cite them in detail.

2. *The Ascent to Mount Sinai through Wadi Selaf and the Nakb Hawy, or Pass of the Winds.*

Wadi Hebran conducts to Wadi Selaf, which, though but a continuation of the former, is different in appearance and in its geographical relations. The Hebran is a well-watered, and, for the desert, luxuriant pathway, generally narrow and gorge-like, between towering masses of the volcanic rock which forms the central mountain region. The Selaf, on the contrary, is a broad and sandy wadi, which lies like a belt separating the Sinai group from the Serbal. It is but three hours in length to the place where it meets Wadi Ghurbeh, its real continuation on to the great curving Wadi el Sheikh. But at the point where it passes into and adopts the name Wadi Ghurbeh, it is intersected by the regular northern route from Suez to Sinai.

From this point of intersection there are two available routes for reaching the spot which is the goal of all travellers in that region—Mount Sinai. The easiest, although the most circuitous, is to continue straight on through Wadi Ghurbeh to its junction with the great Wadi Sheikh, whose ascent is very gentle and little impeded, to the great plain er-Rahah, lying just north of the sacred mountain. The other is much shorter, but far more difficult. It is by way of the narrow, steep, and rocky pass called by the Arabs Nakb el Hawy, or Pass of the Winds. It has often been taken, and often described. Von Schubert turned up to the Rahah plain through it; so did Burckhardt, Canon Morison,[1] Lord Lindsay,[2] Robinson,[3] and Lepsius. By the accounts of all, the way is extremely difficult, the scenery fearfully wild and desolate. The gorge is narrow, and the reason for its being called the Pass of the Winds becomes immediately evident to the traveller, so furiously do the

[1] A. Morison, *Chanoine, Rel. historique d'un Voy. novellement fait au Mont Sinai et à Jerusalem*, Toul. 1704, p. 91.

[2] Lord Lindsay, *Letters on the Holy Land*, vol. i. p. 283.

[3] Robinson's *Biblical Researches.*

currents of air sweep through it. Huge fragments of rock strew the way, the debris of the cliffs, which rise to a height of from eight hundred to a thousand feet, and overhang the narrow way. Over these shattered masses the camels slowly and toilfully pick their way. There are traces, however, of a paved road, conjectured to have been built in early times by the monks, who were so numerous in all the neighbourhood, as a means of easier communication with the spot of the most interest to them—the sacred mountain of Sinai. Some of the inscriptions which are so common in all parts of the Peninsula have been discovered in parts of the pass, but they are not so marked but that very careful observers have failed to notice them. Near the confluence of the Nakb el Hawy with Wadi Solaf, or Selaf, is the side wadi Rudhwan, running off towards the south, and communicating with that retired valley in which Laborde discovered the ruins of a convent.

The Nakb Hawy, called by Lindsay Nakb How, by Burckhardt Nakb er Rahah, by Lepsius Nakb Haui, is, as will be inferred from the above brief summary, a narrow and steep staircase leading from the lower district of the Serbal to the high plain or plateau on which rest the lofty mountains of the Sinai group. As a means of ascent, the great difficulty of ascending will always prevent its being generally chosen as a means of reaching the convent and the places of greatest interest to the pilgrim; but its terribly savage desolation, and its impressive introduction to the places associated with the giving of the law, will continue to impart to it a certain interest.

CHAPTER V.

Sec. 9. THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SINAI PENINSULA IN THEIR TWO MAIN GROUPS, SINAI AND SERBAL.

FIRST GROUP.

THE CENTRAL GROUP OF THE JEBEL MUSA, THE "MOUNT OF MOSES," AND THE TUR SINA OF THE ARABS—HOREB AND SINAI, OR THE "MOUNTAINS OF MOSES" OF CHRISTIANS AND MOHAMMEDANS.

General View.

ONLY by a thorough scientific examination made in person, can sound knowledge be gained about any group of mountains; and here such an examination is utterly wanting—it has never been made. Those who have visited the region which we are about to study, have had to follow the caprice of ignorant Beduins, or have had to accommodate themselves to the exigencies of necessity. The deep recesses, the stern rocks utterly destitute of soil, have thus far compelled travellers to avoid wide detours, and have caused them to fix their gaze upon one, and but one, desired object—the Convent of St Catherine. Their interest in this sacred place cannot be lightly spoken of, nor their desire to reach it wondered at; yet it is much to be regretted that it has been the occasion of a great neglect of the physical features of the Sinai group, excepting so far as they lie in the immediate neighbourhood of the convent, and in the scenes hallowed by ancient legends. It is only within a most recent period that travellers have begun to cast free glances beyond those castellated walls, and to free themselves from the mere assertions of those who merely repeated a well-worn tale. For although there was much that is unquestionably true in what used to be told to every traveller, although the coloured glass through which the tourist

had to look was veritable glass, yet much was trivial, and there was ample need for the acute investigations of our day to strike into a new field and ascertain more valuable facts. And what a contrast to the old reports of travellers, who never inquired, and whose highest exercise of mind was a wondering adoration, are the results given us by Seetzen, Burckhardt, Ruppell, Robinson, Russegger, Schimper, Lepsius, and others! And still there is an endless amount yet to learn. Even now the whole mountain district south of Jebel Musa, and the immediate vicinity of the convent, is a *terra incognita* to us; and the highest peak, Om Shomar, has only been visited by one man, Burckhardt; only the approaches on the south-west, north-west, north-east, and north-west have been examined, but all the other ravines, valleys, passes, and summits remain unexplored. Of the systematic connection of the whole district we as yet know nothing; we have only random facts, and it may be mere conjectures at times, to supply the place of sure knowledge. Cartographers have copied servilely one from another, or have filled out the blank spaces each for himself; and till Dr Laborde gave us his valuable map, we had nothing on which we could rely. The new and admirable maps of Kiepert and C. Zimmermann, however, gather up all our recent knowledge, and by reason of their large scale supply a great want, and are especially to be commended.

A careful comparison of certain fragmentary data, and an indication of original observations, will be the first step in our course, if we wish to secure the most comprehensive view of the subject, and to assist future travellers to fill up the present gaps.

From the older *Itineraria* we gain no clear view of any attempts made by travellers to explore the central Sinai group. Pietro Della Valle, who journeyed over Suez in a south-eastward direction towards the end of December 1615, belongs to the most acute and intelligent travellers of that period, and gained a clearer insight than most into the natural conditions and relations of the countries which he visited. Yet what we learn from him is exceedingly vague and general.

On the 18th of December he left Suez, and travelled southward along the shore of the Red Sea as far as the Wells of Moses, where he found a number of growing plants; thence

he journeyed for three days upon a plain [probably the one which extends towards the south-east]. On the 21st of December he had left the plain, and was approaching the mountains, which at the outset were not high, but which constantly increased in this regard. The country was very unfruitful; yet once in a while he fell in with fertile strips, which he likens to the valleys which one meets on the pilgrimage to St Loretto in Italy. Wherever water was found, there were palms and gum trees [perhaps in Wadi Feiran, though he mentions no name]. At one place he found a waterfall, which he considered picturesque enough to make a drawing of.

Two days later, on the 23d of December, the almost impassable ways compelled him to make a long detour into a broad valley [probably el-Sheikh], on the east side of which he found the convent in a side ravine, a half-hour's walk from the broad valley. He arrived in the night, and the door was closed. Hundreds of Arabs were encamped under the walls, and were begging for bread. After a while the door was opened, and he was admitted. Directly through the convent flows the brook of Moses, at which he used to water his flocks. On one of the following days he resolved to ascend the eminence. The two mountains, Horeb and Sinai, says Della Valle, form in reality but one: they have a common base, but part the wider from each other the higher they ascend, and at the foot of their north-eastern slope the convent lies. Horeb, he says, looks at first insignificant, because the summit cannot be seen for some time; but it has four or five peaks rising from it at various places, and completely shuts out the view of Sinai. We ascended, says Della Valle, to a fine spring, and then higher up to a chapel of the Virgin Mary. A third of the way up he encountered snow. Higher still he found four chapels, one of them with an altar; to this the prophet Elijah fled when pursued by Jezebel. The summit of Sinai is more lofty, he tells us, than that of Horeb, where he now stood, all covered with snow. He then descended on the western side to a deep narrow ravine, in which lies el-Arbain, the Convent of the Forty Martyrs, where preparations had been made for his entertainment by a party of monks. From this point he attempted on the following day to ascend to the summit of Sinai, but the snow was so deep that he was able to progress no farther than

to the spot where the angels laid the body of St Catherine. The descent from this point to el-Arbain was very perilous on account of the snow. We see from this account that the mountain now known as St Catherine was called Sinai by Della Valle, and that the one nearest the convent, now bearing the name of Jebel Musa, was designated by him as Horeb. From el-Arbain the wealthy Italian turned back to the convent, and passed thence to Suez by way of Tor, but has given us no further record, saving that he saw two inscriptions upon stone, which he did not copy.

The above account agrees in the main with that given us in the middle of the same century by J. Thevenot, who in 1658, and at a rather more favourable season of the year, came into the same region by way of Tor. On the 2d of February he reached el-Arbain, *i.e.* "The Forty Martyrs," and was hospitably received by the monks of the Greek convent then there, in consequence of his being accompanied by an ecclesiastic from the convent at Tor. At that time el-Arbain, which is now deserted, was in good condition, and was surrounded by gardens, the fruit of which was sent to Cairo for sale. The Convent of St Catherine, on the contrary, was at that time in a dilapidated state: the monks who remained there were in a constant quarrel with the Beduins, but the most of them had fled for greater security to Tor. No one was then received as a guest into the convent, and the very entrances were walled up. The main sources of revenue, which were derivable from Cyprus, were taken away in consequence of the Turkish possession of the island; and the bishop of the convent did not honour it with his presence, but resided at Cairo.

This condition of affairs could not fail to have a great influence on travel thither, and put great limitations upon the possibility of making observations in the neighbourhood. Still Thevenot was able to make the same ascent of the mountain on the south which Della Valle had made; but instead of calling it Sinai, he designates it by the same name which it bears now, Mount St Catherine.

On the 3d of February he ascended from el-Arbain, the mountain lying eastward, which, though less high, was covered with snow, and which he does not designate as either Sinai or Horeb, but as Jebel Musa, the name which it bears now among

the Arabs. On the summit he found two churches or chapels, the one of which was used by Greeks, the other by Latin Christians, and in their neighbourhood a small mosque: on the summit of the mountain he was told that Moses received the commandments. On descending to the Convent of St Catherine he passed the Chapel of the Prophet Elijah, and saw the footprints of Mohammed's camel [Mohammed never entered the Sinai Peninsula]. Thevenot tells us that the spot was reverently kissed by the Arabs; but he ascribed the invention of the fable to the monks, in order that they might find favour with the Mohammedan inhabitants of the land. All over the mountain, and especially in the neighbourhood of the chapels, were Arab encampments. For lack of time he did not undertake to visit them all. At one very conveniently situated place, he passed, on his descent to the convent, a gate in a state of partial ruin [the posts are to be seen even now], where he was obliged to pay a toll. He could not enter the convent; but after walking around it and its garden, he turned westward towards el-Arbain, and then for the first time "saw Mount Horeb, where Moses tended his sheep."

In these accounts of an Italian and a French traveller we get a clear account, so far as they go, of the various objects in the neighbourhood, and a definite allusion to the legends which were even then poured into the ears of travellers. As topographical records of what was in the immediate vicinity of the stations of the monks they are tolerably satisfactory; but they give no definite idea of the nature of the district viewed as a whole,—a want which is not even yet fully supplied.

The distinguished names of Thomas Shaw, 1721; Richard Pococke, 1738; and even of the admirable Carsten Niebuhr, 1762, do not in this regard supply all that we lack. The two English travellers bestow not a glance upon the country taken as a whole: they give us a mere transcript of details, as they were given them by their monkish guides. Shaw is comparatively meagre even in this, and does not dwell at length upon many spots which were considered hallowed; while Pococke, on the contrary, enters into every legend, describes every ruined wall, every chapel, every bending of the road, and accompanies his description with some maps, which, as they were not executed by himself, nor by one who had been on the spot, are

exceedingly inaccurate, and only here and there give us any assistance. But Pococke is so far from attaining to any living insight into the relations of the parts to the whole, and is so lacking in a conception of the mutual relation of the geography of the country to its history, that he only gives a transcript of his own narrowness when he says, "As to the natural history of this region, it will not be worth while to add more to what I have already said." A point which I hold to be all-important to the proper understanding and interpretation of a country, Pococke wholly passes over.

It is Niebuhr who here, as in so many other districts, has thrown the clear light of his intelligence over this subject, and has displayed the acumen and the tact of the true geographer. It is a matter of unceasing regret that he was obliged to traverse this interesting district in so hasty a manner, to not even entering the convent, nor ascending to the summit of Sinai or St Catherine. He does not even seem to have heard of el-Arbain, and was allowed by the Arabs only to go up the mountain as far as the Chapel of Elijah; and to add to these hard conditions, the refractory Beduins would give him no information, but obliged him to hurry immediately away. All that they told him was, that this mountain was the Tur Sina.

Still, such was the zeal and such the ability of this wonderful man, that he was able to extract much even from these scanty opportunities. He ascertained the distance of the convent from Suez to be 133 English miles, and its general bearings to be S.S.E. from it. He also threw off a small but accurate map of the ravine where the convent stands, and a sketch of the buildings, including the gardens, and the path leading up to Elijah's chapel. He was as little of a draughtsman as he was engineer; but what he gave us was incomparably better than anything which had been attempted before, although much surpassed by those who have come after him with far better appliances.

But the special service rendered by Niebuhr is best understood from this fact, that he was the first who distinguished Mount Serbal, with the Wadi Feiran (he writes Sirbal and Farân), and the northern group of mountains, from Jebel Musa and the southern group.

In this the German traveller followed implicitly the state-

ments of his Arab conductors, who designated the southerly continuance of the level valley of Serbal, nine miles farther on through the Wadi Selaf, by the name of Wadi Farân, *i.e.* as far south-east as the foot of Jebel Musa, nine miles, whence to the convent is still a distance of eleven and a half miles. The latter part of the way passes by the rocks of Kanoytor, with their inscribed sides, and is prolonged therefore from the meeting of the Wadi Feiran and the road from Tor, by way of the windy passes of Nakb Egani, Nakb Hawy, and Nakb el Rahah: with these commences the central elevation of the convent district within the great curve of the Wadi Sheikh and south of it. From the altitude of Wadi Selaf, 2709 feet, the rise is sudden to more than 4000 feet, above which elevation lie all the valleys and all the plains of the southern group. The convent, which is estimated by von Schubert to be 4725 feet, and by Russegger to be 5115 above the sea, lies a little above the lowest level of this high tract; but it and the region around Abu Suweirah stand alike on a common plateau, above which all the special peaks of the Sinai group rise to their respective heights.

This great common elevation of the central group around the convent, where the base of all the mountains rests upon a pediment about 4000 feet above the sea, is therefore radically different from that of the Serbal group, which rises abruptly from the Wadi Feiran, and rests on its southern side, directly on the low coast plain el-Kaa. It is completely severed from the Sinai group by the Wadi Hebrân. Its complete physical isolation in consequence makes it only correct to say, that the central mountain system of the Sinai Peninsula is subdivided into two leading groups: the northerly one of the Jebel Serbal, with the Wadi Feiran; and the southerly one, which is regarded even by the Beduins as distinct from the former, and is known by the name of Jebel Musa, the "Mountains of Moses;" while the "Mount of Moses," in a more restricted sense, *i.e.* the Tor Sina, forms the hallowed central peak. It is manifest that Niebuhr hints at this radical division, though his meaning has hitherto not been noticed, when he says, "One sees, therefore, that the mountain which the Greeks call Sinai (Tor Sina) does not lie in a great plain, as many have supposed. Yet it cannot be asserted from this, that the Sinai of

the Greeks was not the true one; for our Arabs called the whole group, from the extremity of the Ferân valley, Jebel Musa, the 'Mountains of Moses,' and the part where the convent stands Tur Sina."

Keeping this radical distinction in mind, I proceed to discuss the more southerly of these two groups, in its various subdivisions.

DISCURSION I.

THE GROUP OF THE JEBEL MUSA, OR THE "MOUNTAINS OF MOSES."

1. *The Natural Boundary of the Group.*

The solidly built hospitium known as the Convent of St Catherine, with its immediately contiguous peak, the Sinai of the monks, the Tor Sina of the Arabs, the Jebel Musa or Mount of Moses in a restricted sense, forms only one part of the Jebel Musa or Mountains of Moses in a larger and less restricted sense; but this small part is by far the best known of all, and it is the chief point of prominence in every description of the group. It forms the extreme northerly extremity of the whole: its northern base rests upon the plain er-Rahah (Wadi er Rahah), known sometimes as the Bortan plain (*bortan*, a garden), 4000 feet above the sea. Towards the north-west this high plain contracts within narrow mountain passes; but on the north-north-east it opens into the broad cleft known as el-Sheikh, whose eastern extremity, at the camping ground Abu Suweirah, is 4005 feet above the ocean. A half-hour's walk eastward from the Abu Suweirah brings one to the termination of the high plateau on which the Sinai mountains rest, and to the abrupt descent from Alpine heights and primitive geological forms to an entirely different kind of scenery, and to eminences far less lofty.

Both Seetzen and Robinson place the northern limit of the Sinai group at the place just indicated, and both agree in locating at the Abu Suweirah the water-shed between the two arms of the Red Sea; discernible with the greater difficulty, because, although there are channels and watercourses in abundance, there are no waters pouring through them. The

curving Wadi el Sheikh loops around the group, and forms its natural boundary up to the point where it is joined by the Wadi Akhbor, from which point Robinson advanced over the Seheb plain to the mountain called el-Orf, and thence westward to the narrow part of the Wadi Feiran, the place where Russegger, Lord Lindsay, and others, entered the Sinai district.

A little farther to the north-west, past some narrow mountain ravines, lies the comparatively low Wadi Selâf, 2709 feet above the sea. This lies wholly exterior to the Sinai group, and is the medium of transition to the Wadi Feiran, and therefore the link between the Sinai and the Serbal groups. The portion of the Wadi Feiran which contracts to a breadth of only eight paces is called el-Bueb (*bab*, door), and very soon opens into the broad Wadi el Sheikh. From this, which bends away in a noble curve to the north-east, the Wadi Selâf runs directly to Sinai; but its course is upward, and grows steep and hard to traverse as it nears the narrow ravines at its end. The lofty mountain chain begins there, at the Nakb Egani, and extends south-south-east, past the spurs along the Wadi Hebran and the Wadi Oijmeh to the Oijmeh, a very lofty peak described by Burckhardt under the name Odjmeh. At the southern extremity the chain embraces the mighty Om Shomar, which, with its conical summit, and the bold precipitous sides of its outlying cliffs, forms at once the key-stone of the group. Burckhardt is the only traveller who has ascended it; and it is to him that we are indebted for our most accurate information regarding the group as a whole, and our clearest insight into its configuration. Between the Om Shomar at the south, and Sinai at the north of this central group, lies, in a direct line, and almost exactly midway, a third great landmark, Mount St Catherine, which may be regarded as the true centre of the real Mountains of Moses. The extent of the range towards the east and the south-east is not so clear; we cannot wander far from the truth, if, with Robinson, starting at Abu Suweirah, the water-shed of the central granite district, we consider the Jebel Fera, and the peaks which lie on the north-east side of the Sinai group, Um Lanz, Um Alawy, and Ras el Ferush, to be the outposts, and also reckon the porphyritic and granite mountains at the south-east, Mordam and Mohala, also as belonging to it. A high, massive, yet narrow branch of the range ap-

pears to extend southward towards Sherm, the extremity of which Burckhardt passed on his way from Sherm to Tor. Yet it must be confessed, that the whole district between his route and Om Shomar, designated on Robinson's map as Jebel et Turfa, is too little known for us to venture on any consideration of it. Leaving it out of the question, the Sinai group forms an ellipse extending from north-west to south-east.

As one comes over the usual route for pilgrims, either by way of Wadi Feiran or Wadi Hebran, he must needs traverse the steep passes which lie between Sinai and Serbal. Entering the central mountain district, the peaks become more and more lofty as we advance southward. The plain er-Rahah is computed to lie about 4000 feet above the level of the sea; the convent, 4725 feet (Dr Erdl), 5115 feet (Russegger); the summit of Sinai, 6796 feet, 7097 according to Russegger; that of Mount Catherine, 8168 feet, according to the same authority; Om Shomar has never been measured, but Russegger conjectured that it, as well as three or four mountains close by it, whose names are unknown, attains a height of 9000 feet. The approach to this mountain district from the Wadi Feiran and the gorges around Serbal, up through the steep pass which leads directly to Sinai, is confirmed by all travellers who have entered by that route.

"From the Wadi Genne," says Russegger [perhaps Djenne, a southern branch of the Wadi Feiran, and probably parallel with the Wadi Selâf], "the nature of this mountain region grows wilder and more imposing: the summits tower to a height of 5000 to 6000 feet, the ravines become narrower, and run in longer and more direct courses. The forms of the mountains are extremely picturesque, and the view of Sinai is noble [he means the whole Sinaitic group, for the true Sinai is hidden at this point by intervening peaks]; but through the steep granite walls the travellers look as through the tube of a telescope at the sublime view which terminates the prospect."

"My last halt before arriving at Sinai," says Russegger in continuance, "was Jebel Fria [Robinson's Jebel el Fureia], upon a small but elevated plateau; yet towering above it rise the precipitous, ragged, and dark walls, hollowed out here and there with fearful indentations. On the next morning it seemed impossible to proceed: we turned aside into one of the gorges,

which, although from twenty to thirty feet wide, was hemmed in by rocks many hundreds of feet in height. Through this Nakb Haui, the Wind-gorge, or Wind-pass, as the Arabs call it, we advance to the convent in a much shorter time, though perhaps with more difficulty, than over the usual route which pilgrims take, through the Wadi Mochsen [probably a part of the Wadi Sheikh]. Four hours of hard climbing brought us to the first outlying peaks of Sinai. The dreadful road compelled me to dismount from my camel, for it could only be led, not driven. After reaching the highest point, and then descending again through Nakb er Rahah, according to Burckhardt's description, we reached the plain where the Israelites seem to have encamped, lying at a height of 4000 feet above the sea, and lying between Jebel Ebestemi and Jebel Horeb. This plain is extended or prolonged into a narrow defile, in which the Convent of St Catherine lies, and one side of which is formed by the Jebel Musa."

Lord Lindsay, who pursued the same route as Russegger from the Wadi Feiran, but who at the very end of it passed through the narrow pass el-Bueb into the Wadi Sheikh, passed through this and then entered the Wadi Selâf, says that from this point there commences "a continual ascent towards the elevated district of Sinai. On the 16th of March, at an early hour, the rising sun was just lighting up the peaks of the mountains—the birds were singing their matins merrily: the view behind was closed by the noble peaks of the Serbal; but five or six of the neighbouring summits towered up in the early dawn, reddish brown in colour, and with deep blue shadows. Each one of these peaks was broken up into a number of pinnacles, which became less lofty towards the west. Leaving the more accessible and easy route through the Wadi Sheikh on the left, we took our course through the much less picturesque Wadi Selâf. There is good pasturage in it for sheep and goats, which were here under the care of Beduin shepherdesses. We saw in this place the rethem [rattam Lindsay calls it], with its white flower delicately streaked with purple; the selleh (?) with leaves of the lightest tint of green, bearing a very pretty flower of a light pink colour, beautifully streaked inside; the deep green ooraga (?), and hundreds of lizards of the colour of the sand, and called by the Beduins *serebani*. We passed five hours on this part of the way, from six to eleven, till we reached

the foot of Jebel How. [el-Haui], at which point the steep ascent begins. The path, passing through one of the most extraordinary defiles that I have ever seen, and rudely paved in the steepest parts, leads directly to Mount Sinai. The groups of camels slowly defiling along, at different heights of the ravine, and sometimes in different directions, were highly picturesque. After three hours' climbing we arrived at the summit, and our first view of Sinai was gained; its side facing us, bearing not that name, however, but Jebel Shereyk. The broad plain er-Raha slopes to its very base.

That plateau, er-Raha, small in itself, but elevated 4000 feet above the sea, yet a mere valley compared with the mighty peaks which tower around it, is, despite its relatively meagre proportions, one of the largest plains found in that whole Sinai group. It was this feature which first directed Robinson's attention to it,—the broadly extending plain encompassed by narrow mountain passes,—which made him decide that it must have been the true place of encampment for the children of Israel. All the other wadis are contracted, and utterly unfit for such a purpose; only the Wadi Sheikh is an exception. And even this is no true exception; for it is in reality a mere continuation of the plain er-Rahah. I have in another place called the reader's attention to this wonderful contrast, a large and open plain in the heart of a rough mountain land; and it is no wonder that when the keen-sighted American saw it, he cried out, "Here is room enough for a large encampment!" "A fair, broad plain," he says, "lay before us, extending from the narrow ravine, or 'Windy Pass,' at the north-west, south-eastward, shut in on each side by lofty granite ridges, with shattered peaks a thousand feet high, stern, naked, and of indescribable grandeur,—a scene wholly unexpected, and such as we had never seen." Robinson was the first—Laborde may jealously dispute[1] it if he will—who discerned the topographical character of the spot, and its adaptedness to the wants of a large encampment: thousands have been over the same route, as Laborde himself very rightly, no doubt, remarks; but no man of them was struck with the characteristic which Robin-

[1] L. de Laborde, *Commentaire sur l'Exode*, Append. pp. 1, 41, 42. Laborde, in his map, p. 105, has done ample justice, however, to the size of er-Raha.—ED.

son noticed at once. The American's words, "No traveller has described this plain, nor even mentioned it, except in a slight, and general manner," are perfectly true; although Laborde has given us his admirable *Vue pittoresque* of the same spot. Robinson was the first to take the measure of its dimensions, and the first to attempt to show its connection with the history of Israel, and his view will always be worth consideration; and the size of the plain will always be a matter of moment and of interest, although perhaps not to the extent which he supposed, since he and all who went before him were ignorant of the existence of a plain in that region larger than er-Rahah. And it is difficult for any reader of Robinson's pages, if he carries to their perusal any vivid recollections of the impressions of his youth regarding the solemn scene once enacted on Horeb, to follow the eager author in his account, and not to feel strongly impressed that that was the very spot where the Lord came down and rested upon the trembling mount, and amid flame and smoke and the sound of a trumpet, gave his laws and the ten commandments to the people through the mouth of his prophet.

In contrast with the swelling feelings which filled the mind of the great American, and which made the convent to become the mere reflection, or rather one of the side rays, of that great light which once broke from Horeb upon all the world, is the narrow curiosity of most pilgrims, who narrate with strange minuteness every trivial thing connected with the convent, and the monks appear to regard these as the natural goal of their toilsome journey, reserving only a few words for the mountain itself, its character, and all the natural features which make it interesting, and which fit it for the scene of a Divine Revelation.

2. *The three great Ravines, with the two intervening Mountains, and the Spurs running southward with constantly increasing height.*

The great plain er-Raha slopes gradually towards the south-east, and there continuing in its normal direction, it narrows to a very contracted pass between the cliffs, which, although taking the name Wadi Shoeib, may be rightly considered a part of the adjacent plain. A short half-hour's walk up this ravine

lies the Convent of St Catherine, and hence it is not uncommon to speak of the pass as the Valley of the Convent. The dark green of its fruit trees and cypresses coming in such close contact with the bare and fortress-like walls of the mountain, usually throw travellers, wearied of the desert, into transports of delight. The name Wadi Shoeib, or Vale of Jethro, is given to the spot by the Arabs, because their tradition assigns to this place the honour of once being the pasture of the priest of Midian.

This is not the only ravine, however, which passes in the same direction through the group: it is merely the middle of three parallel ones, of which the western, the Ledja Vale (Leja in Robinson), is usually known as the Valley of the Forty, el-Arbain, and still contains the ruins of a convent and some gardens. It derives its name Ledja, *i.e.* the "stony place," from the huge masses of rock which have dropped into it from the overhanging precipices, and from its exceedingly rough character. On its west side, and parallel with it, rises the mountain known as el-Humr, which in its southern part towers still higher, and bears the well-known name of St Catherine. The Ledja gorge has no southern outlet: St Catherine closes it, and is visible from it even to its summit. On the north of el-Humr and west of the plain er-Raha is the Jebel el Ghubsheh, but the two mountains are parted by a pass which runs westward to the Wadi Tullah, and connects the plain with the Wadi Hebran and the road to Tor. Up to this time this pass, which seems to be the same with one called the Wadi el Ghor by Burckhardt, has been neither visited nor described. East of el-Arbain rises Sinai, Jebel Musa in a limited sense, but almost always called by the monks and the Arabs Jebel et Tûr, seldom Tur Sinai. This long mountain (regarding it all as one) parts the Wadi Shoeib or Vale of the Convent and the Vale el-Arbain. Its southern extremity towers the highest, and bears the name of Sinai proper, and has on its summit a mosque and a small chapel, the real goal of most pilgrimages. The northern portion is usually called Horeb by the monks, and is the part which was regarded by Robinson as the place where the law was given.

The middle gorge, the Wadi Shoeib, on the east side of Sinai, is the most visited of all, because of the convent which

is within it; it leads to most of the localities which are commonly visited, and is the headquarters of almost all travellers. Yet no one[1] has yet gone southward, and that whole region is almost unknown to us. Burckhardt, crossing from the Ælanitic Gulf to Sinai, has given us a few instructive words, however. The morning after his last encampment, before reaching the convent, he tells us that he ascended a mountain from which a beautiful prospect was had, including the broad Wadi Sebaijeh, over which he must pass in order to reach the mountain which commands the convent from the south. The vale of the convent is therefore not a *cul-de-sac*, like the Ledja, but has a bridle-path, so to speak, which, traversing the Jebel Sebaijeh, can be used as the direct road to Sherm. The name Sebaijeh is common both to a mountain and to a wadi.

It is this important locality, not critically examined by Robinson, not counted especially interesting by Burckhardt, which, when still further examined, will be found to have great claims to be considered as the site of God's wonderful dealings with Israel.

Wadi Sebaijeh is the name given to the most easterly of the three parallel ravines, which pass in a generally south-east direction through the mountain group. It is the least known, and yet is the broadest[2] of all. It is this which runs around Jebel ed Deir, the most eastern of the three parallel mountain lines, to the southern base, marked by a narrow pass, of Jebel

[1] Since this was written, Stanley has made a brief visit to ed-Deir, lying on the east side of the pass. *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 77.—ED.

[2] I wish to retain this whole passage, not because it is valuable, but to show the broad and careful manner in which Ritter generalizes when a sure footing of facts fails him. It is hardly necessary to inform the reader that the publication of Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* has set the whole matter at rest, and has demonstrated Ritter's argument to be wrong. Not only the view of the Wadi Sebaijeh which he gained from Jebel ed Deir, but his personal examination of the place on the third day of his stay at the convent, are convincing testimony that all previous travellers have been mistaken. Ritter has given us, in his *Lectures on Comparative Geography*, a striking instance of his candour in retracting the results of a similar mode of reasoning regarding the central districts of Africa, and has cancelled in this way views first promulgated in the first volume of the *Erdkunde*; and he would be the first to acknowledge himself wrong in this place after being fully set right.—See Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 42, 75, 76, 78. See also Bonar's *Desert of Sinai*, p. 223.

Sebaijeh (more properly Merágá, the Keeper's Mount, as von Schubert, Lepsius, and Robinson in a special map, have given it), and then bears to the south and west. But as Robinson did not visit it, but only looked into it as well as he could from the summit of Sinai, he was able to discern only the gravel hills which lie at the opening and hide the view. He concluded the valley to be but a small one, therefore; and it escaped his penetration that here would be found a plain correspondent to er-Raha at the north, and perhaps even longer. He has merely indicated the Wadi Sebaijeh on his map as a collection of "naked gravel hills." Tischendorf got the same impression[1] of the narrowness of Wadi Sebaijeh, but he only viewed it from the summit of Sinai; yet he did not hesitate to accept the place as that where the children of Israel received the law. The broad Sebaijeh plain it is which Laborde gives in its full proportions on a special map, tracing it from its wide northern margin where it merges into the Wadi Sebaijeh, to the south-eastern base of Sinai. He designated it as "Oadye Sebaye, campement des enfans d'Israel,"[2] and his conjecture has been followed by many travellers since. There must, of course, be a deviation in the interpretation of the Mosaic narrative, according as Laborde's or Robinson's conjectures are accepted, but of this we will speak anon. Still it may be said in this place, that this southern mount, Jebel Sebaijeh, which, with its narrow pass, is the connecting bond between ed-Deir and Jebel Musa, is the spot where, according to the legend, Moses tended Jethro's (Shoeib's) sheep, and that it derives thence the ancient name which it bears, signifying the Keeper's Mountain. It is also to be remarked that the Wadi Sebaijeh, through its whole extent from the north (from the place where er-Raha meets the Wadi Sheikh), continues equally wide with the Wadi Sheikh till it reaches the Sebaijeh plain at the south, where it expands into that broad tract. It is therefore the true link between

[1] C. Tischendorf, *Travels in the East.* In citing an authority of so much eminence, it ought in justice to be said that Tischendorf speaks very hastily in the matter, and as if without much reason for his conviction: as if merely accepting what was undisputed.—Ed.

[2] *Plan topographique du massif de rochers du milieu desquels d'élèvent le Sinaï, Horeb et le Mont St Cathérine, dressé et dessiné,* par L. de Laborde, 1841. Also, *Commentaire sur l'Exode,* by the same.

er-Raha and the Sebaijeh plain, and these two are complementary to each other.

The third mountain, the most easterly of all, lying between the Wadi Shoeib and the Wadi Sebaijeh, is called by most recent travellers ed-Deir (from *deir*, convent), but upon Laborde's map it bears the name of St Episteme, who appears to have lived with her husband upon the mountain, and to have built a convent for nuns, and to have erected a cross. The ruins are still visible, and the eminence bears the double title of the Mountain of the Convent and the Mountain of the Cross. A view from its summit[1] would doubtless amply repay the toil, and would give a most satisfactory solution of many difficult questions, and throw much light upon the giving of the law. A spur of this mountain running west, and lying south-east of Mount St Catherine, closes the view as one stands on the Raha plain and looks down the Valley of the Convent. It is called by the Arabs Limnegia, or Minnegia. As it would have been impossible for Moses to go to the summit of Sinai (Sinai proper, the southernmost peak of Jebel Musa) two or three times a day to receive the commands of the Lord,[2] Lord Lindsay has supposed that it answers the conditions of the Mosaic account to accept that lower height, Limnegia, as the true Sinai, and that the people looked from er-Raha down the pass, they themselves standing "afar off."

In order to gain a clear and living conception of the physical geography of this whole region, and make the whole picture manifest to our mind, it will be necessary to enter yet further into topographical details, and to follow the least traces which remain to us after the lapse of nearly four thousand years, and throw light on that distant time.

The three parallel gorges already named, extending south-eastward, and enclosing Sinai and ed-Deir, are very analogous to each other in many respects, and yet very different in some,

[1] See Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 77. Stanley's view thence induced him to believe Ritter's theory of the Wadi Sebaijeh untenable.—ED.

[2] This point is not decisive as to this high hill being Sinai, for the northern declivity of Jebel Musa would be easily reached by a hale man two or three times a day; but the suggestion is a valuable one negatively to those who, like Bonar (*Desert of Sinai*), accept the theory that the southern and highest peak is that on which the glory of the Lord rested.—ED.

especially in width; the eastern one, Wadi Sebaijeh, being the only one which can be compared, in this regard, with the broad Wadi Sheikh. The most western one, the Ledja, the narrowest and the most filled with fragments of rock, is wholly closed at the south by the lofty Mount St Catherine; it is a *cul-de-sac*, open only at the north, where it joins the plain er-Raha. It is the richest in springs; for besides being fed by the loftiest mountains, those which receive the greatest amount of snow, it is more shaded on the north side, and hence is less exposed to the drying effects of the sun's heat.

The middle ravine, that of the convent, opens freely towards the north on the plain er-Raha, is not remarkable for the usual aspect of wild mountain gorges, is very little impeded with fallen fragments of rock, and is not wholly closed at the south, like the Ledja. It is connected by a narrow and not difficult path passing over the Sebaijeh mountain, with the great amphitheatrical plain of Sebaijeh, which von Strauss[1] and Kraft have made the subject of special measurement, in order to compare it with the plain er-Raha. The third passage, the Wadi Sebaijeh, is the broadest of all, and is characterized by the many basins which are met along its winding course, and which would have well met the needs of a large body of people. This wadi is six hundred feet wide even in its narrowest places, and opens not only into the broad plain er-Raha at the north, but also into the perhaps yet larger plain Sebaijeh at the south, which comes close to the base of the Mount Sinai of tradition, the southernmost and loftiest peak of the Jebel Musa, which towers grandly above it, and forms a sublime contrast to the low gravel hills which roughen the southern portion of the wadi. Hitherto almost overlooked, this wadi stands in the closest relations with both the northern and the southern plain, and had unquestionably a much greater prominence in the biblical history than has thus far been conceded to it.

3. *The Paths or Roads which traverse this Mountain Group.*

The ravines already described, travellers have usually made the starting-point of their mountain ascents. From el-Arbain in the Ledja leads the only path which runs to the summit

[1] A. Fr. Strauss, *Reise in das Morgenland, Sinai und Golgotha.*

of St Catherine; at least no other has ever been taken. We have interesting and valuable accounts of its ascent from the following travellers:[1] Della Valle in 1615, Thevenot in 1658, Pococke in 1738, Seetzen in 1807, Burckhardt in 1816, Ruppell in 1831, Lord Lindsay in 1837, Robinson in 1838, and Russegger in 1839. Niebuhr, De Laborde, von Schubert, Tischendorf, and others, did not ascend it.

The middle mountain, Jebel Musa, including Horeb and Sinai, has, however, been thoroughly traversed by pilgrims; Niebuhr, one of the most gifted of all, being unfortunately the only one who has been hindered from reaching the summit. Travellers are accustomed to ascend from the convent on the eastern declivity, to descend to the ruins of el-Arbain in the Ledja at the western base, and then to pass around the northern declivity through the plain er-Raha. In this way they take in all the stations connected with the monkish legends. We have from these travellers a perfect literature of Sinai, embracing some hundreds of volumes, each adding little to what has already been said, excepting as the peculiar training of the individual, or the changes wrought by the various seasons of the year chosen for the visit, may affect the monotony. They have given us in full the legends of the monks, and all the minute details of personal adventure, without in many cases adding at all to what is permanently valuable. To speak of these, or even to cite the list, cannot of course lie within the scope of our plan, which only embraces the works of discerning observers, and the results which they, and they alone, have recorded.

Very few have reversed the order of march, and have gone over the mountain from the Ledja to the convent. In earlier times, however, this must have been the usual way; for it was in accordance with the ancient legend that Moses ascended on the western side, not however from the deep gorge at el-Arbain, but proceeding from the plain er-Raha by way of a much more narrow pass running parallel with the Ledja, but upon a more elevated side shelf of the mountain. This pass debouches

[1] The list may be extended by the addition of Stanley in 1852, Wilson (or rather two of his party) (*Lands of the Bible*) in 1843, Viscount Castlereagh (*Journey to Damascus*), Rev. Mr Tyrwhitt and his party (*Vacation Travels*, 1862–3).

directly into the Raha plain, but in its course it does not traverse the entire length of Sinai, but just above el-Arbain it turns up and emerges on the back of the mountain, just about midway between the northern and the southern extremities. Pococke, the only traveller who has given us a detailed description of it, calls this path "the Valley of Jehovah," and the portion of Horeb which it traverses Mount Serich; the latter being that part which Lord Lindsay first descried on emerging from the Haui pass, and which he calls by the name Shereyk, evidently the same name with Pococke's. The Derb Serich, or "Path of Moses," was supposed by Pococke to have been the way which the prophet took in going up from the plain into the holy mount, it being the easiest and the most direct of the three possible ones. If the children of Israel were encamped on the plain in front of Horeb, this path would communicate much more speedily with them than the more circuitous ones by way of the Convent Valley and the Ledja. Pococke, moreover, indicated a deep depression in the rock where the Derb Serich enters the plain, as the possible spot where the metal for the golden calf was molten (Ex. xxxii. 4), and which he supposes not to have been a small Apis of Memphis, but a Mnevis of Heliopolis, the city from which the Israelites came: at any rate, this locality well satisfies the conditions of the sacred narrative. This path is rich in aromatic herbs throughout its entire length, and here and there displays a thorn tree, called by Pococke *oxyacantha Arabica*. It passes by the chapels of St Pantelieman and St John the Baptist. It leads to a small plain lying on the very ridge of the mountain, about half-way between the northern declivity and the lofty peak of Sinai proper.

Robinson did not explore this path, nor indeed take much notice of it; he alluded unquestionably to it in a passage where he says: "A narrow fissure runs out northward from this basin towards the plain, through which the mountain may be ascended. Here a willow and two hawthorns were growing, with many shrubs; and in all this part of the mountains were great quantities of the fragrant plant Ja'deh, which the monks call hyssop." Is it not possible that there is a connection between the name Valley of Jehovah (Jah) and the name of the plant Ja'deh mentioned by Robinson? At any rate, the whole

subject is interesting, and deserves future study. The old legend here has been allowed to drop into oblivion, although well worthy of preservation. Lepsius has alluded to this path. He heard it distinctly called the Sérsáf Vale, *i.e.* the "Vale of Pasturage," from the abundant stores of the sérsáf bush which are found there, and which supply a firm enough twig to form the walking-sticks which travellers cut as remembrancers. The old name, "Moses Staffs," usually given to them, seems to hint at some ancient connection of the prophet's name with the place.

No traveller has as yet taken the trouble to examine thoroughly the ruins which remain still on the Mount ed Deir; and the Om Shomar, the highest mountain of the whole region, has never been visited excepting by Burckhardt. The difficulty of climbing these shattered granite peaks, and the perfect worthlessness of the region in an agricultural point of view, are not the only obstacles which have stood in the way of travellers; but the extortion, the greed, the robberies, the cheating, and the faithlessness of the Beduins, without whose assistance the journey cannot be attempted, have paralyzed all enterprise in this direction. The attempt is a bold one in face of all these difficulties, and it would not be too much to call it a dangerous one.

DISCURSION II.

THE ASCENT OF SOME OF THE MOUNTAINS OF THE CENTRAL GROUP—OM SHOMAR—ST CATHERINE—HOREB AND SINAI

It is only by the ascent of mountains that we can get a clear conception of the *whole* of this district or of any, and see how all the features of the landscape have mutual relation and adjustment. It will therefore add not a little to our better understanding of the subject, if we follow briefly the notes of the most competent explorers, and look from their several points of view. When we have completed such a circuit of observation, we shall be able to frame a picture of the entire region, and, so far as our materials will allow, to make it a complete one. And we will begin with that journey which stands thus far alone, to the highest point of the whole group, and have

for our guide the most competent explorer who has yet visited Arabia.

1. *Burckhardt's Ascent of Om Shomar.*

On the 23d of May 1816, Burckhardt left the Convent of St Catherine for the purpose of ascending Om Shomar. He started in the night, in order not to awaken the jealousy and suspicion of a number of wild Beduins from the Om Shomar neighbourhood, and took with him his guide Hamd and two of the convent serf Arabs.

He had learned from the monks that they often heard singular noises in the direction of Om Shomar, which they compared to repeated salvos of artillery, but which were unaccompanied with any rumblings of the earth as at Sinai. They could hardly come therefore from an earthquake, but might be connected with some volcanic action at Om Shomar, Burckhardt was able to explain the phenomena, but not to the satisfaction of a body of ignorant and superstitious men; and his visit was prompted by a desire to learn the facts of the case, as well as by a wish to discover the geography of the southern part of the Peninsula.

I will not enter into any minute particulars respecting his progress. He took the open path over Mount Sebaijeh, and then bearing a little to the west, he traversed the Wadi Owass, and the Wadi Rahaba. On his way he passed a collection of the rude stone huts which the Beduins put up in solitary places to store their goods. They are about ten feet high, and twelve on a side, are constructed of rough stones, and are usually found in groups of about a dozen each. Their roofs are mere sticks, their doors the same, and a single blow of a stone would effect an immediate entrance. Yet such is the honour of the Beduins in their relations with each other, that theft is unknown among them; and these huts not unfrequently, as in the case of Sheikh Szaleh, contain articles of real value, shawls, and money.

In about eight hours Burckhardt reached the foot of the mountain. The latter part of the way was extremely picturesque, the rocks were found in the most fantastic shapes, here and there date palms were found, but as a general thing the aridity was dreadful. He tells us that the rocks were black

with the intensity of the heat. Never had he seen a greater scene of desolation. About an hour's walk up the mountain he encountered the remains of the old Convent of Antus, which had once been a place of some mark, and which was inhabited as recently as the beginning of the eighteenth century. Burckhardt had already found in his researches among the manuscripts of the St Catherine Monastery, that Antus had once been on the old route to Tor, and that pilgrims going thither formerly used to choose the very path which he had taken, instead of that now generally followed through the Wadi Hebran. Nothing remains of the old convent but the ruins of a single edifice, which, being of large granite stones, is, if not imperishable, at least not temporary. Higher up he found a few date palms again.

He could not ascend to the summit of Om Shomar, for the last few hundred feet rise so steeply as to be inaccessible. But he was able to make so large a circuit at the height he reached, as to have a noble panorama before him, embracing the Gulf of Suez, the harbour of Tor, and the whole sea-side plain of el-Kaa.

The granite of Om Shomar is white at the top and red at the bottom. Hence at a distance it resembles chalk, being largely composed of feldspar. There is not much hornblende and not much mica in its composition.

He returned to the Convent of St Catherine by the same way which he had come, and arrived on the morning of the third day. He was heartily welcomed by the monks, who were much alarmed about his safety, for the Om Shomar Arabs about the convent were in a rage when they learned of his departure; and two of them instantly started in pursuit of him, swearing that no stranger should enter their country and live to come away. The superior tried to propitiate them by a present, but their anger was unappeasable. They parted, however, on the way, one to take one route, the other another, and Burckhardt encountered only one, who was singly too weak to attack. Thinking that discretion was the better part of valour, he cooled down, and at last softened to such an extent as to consent to become the guest of his enemy, and partake of a fragrant dish of goats' meat, with which Burckhardt was solacing himself after his fatiguing journey.[1]

[1] In February 1862, a party of three Englishmen reached the summit of Om Shomar. The account was communicated by Rev. J. T. Prout,

2. *The Ascent of Mount St Catherine.*

I have already alluded to the ascent of Della Valle and Thevenot. Pococke, an Englishman, was the next who accomplished it. The time spent was four hours. He describes the view as very fine, and as embracing both arms of the Red Sea. He ascribes the name of the mountain to an ancient legend respecting the bones of St Catherine. She was put to death in Alexandria by order of the Emperor Maxentius in the year 307. She was sentenced to die by the wheel, but the instrument fell to pieces miraculously, and she was beheaded. Her last prayer was that she might not fall into the hands of unbelievers. It was answered, and her bones were borne through the air to the summit of this mountain, but were transferred to the convent as soon as it was completed. The name of the monastery was changed after that circumstance from that of the Transfiguration to that of St Catherine. Tischendorf tells us that the bread used in the Eucharist is termed Hagia Katherine, *i.e.* Saint Catherine, and this Greek term may hint at some early influence of Alexandria upon the monastery.

Christ Church, Oxford, to Rev. R. Tyrwhitt, and incorporated by the latter in a paper on Sinai, to be found in *Vacation Tourists*, London 1864. I extract the passage relating the ascent.—ED.

"There is no real difficulty in the ascent of Om Shaumer except at the *cheminée*—like that on the Brevent, but worse—which leads up the Hadjar el Bint, or Maiden Stone, a kind of Jungfrau, which had hitherto repelled all comers. The last peak of a high mountain is generally one of its most difficult points. Witness the Mur de la Côte on Mont Blanc, and the last rocks on Monte Rosa. But though without risk, the whole climb was laborious to a degree. The *debris* of a Swiss mountain are very often partly covered with vegetation, or at least secured in their places by growth of moss and lichen. But on these hills all is bare, sharp granite or volcanic rock, displaced or *in situ;* and the whole ascent of the great ravine, which leads up to the chine and central peak of Om Shaumer, is one mass of huge, insecure fragments of syenite, lying on an extremely abrupt slope. There was plenty of snow in the clefts of the mountain, but it gave no assistance on the steep *éboulement* our friends had to mount. Both were good and tried hill-men, and neither spoke of it as otherwise than severe work. Their scanty breakfast at 3.30 A.M. carried them on to the base of Om Shaumer itself in about three hours and forty minutes. Then began a hard monotonous scramble to the foot of the central peak, and the ridge or backbone of the mountain, and so to the foot of the Hadjar el Bint, the Mauvais Pas of the highest or western peak, in about two hours. Here

Morison[1] ascended Mount St Catherine, and remarks expressly, that although a different mountain from Sinai, it is called Sinai by the Church, under the plea of these words: "Deus qui dedisti legem Moysi in summitate montis Sinai et in eodem loco corpus beatæ Catherinæ," etc. It is probable that a blending of the two names has become too common from this cause.

Seetzen has given us in his journal an account of his ascent in 1807, which unfortunately has never been printed, and which I use in the manuscript form.[2] He tells us that there is no Arabian name whatever attached to the mountain. Seetzen's observations are always valuable; but it is pleasant to recognise the advances which have been made towards the thorough understanding of this district since his visit.

On the 14th of April 1807, Seetzen left the convent of el-Arbain at five in the morning, took his way up the rough, rocky gorge of the Ledja, and climbed the mountain. He found it less steep than Horeb, but more difficult, from the

Saleh at last found a narrow *cheminée* and mounted first, giving a hand to the others. Once past this, a few minutes sufficed to land them on the summit of Om Shaumer. The southward view is very grand, over Râs Mohammed and the expanse of the Red Sea (one never realizes its breadth from the map). Eastward and westward, the eye takes nearly the same range as from the top of Mount St Catherine, but that mountain conceals most things to the northward. Immediately below them all was chaos: sheets of snow or large deep drifts; the smooth steep rocks on which they were standing, and below these steep crevasse-like gorges. Thick mist soon rose to the southward and spoilt the view in part; but the deed was done, and the great mountain vanquished for the first time by a European. The chine of the mountain had been reached by Burckhardt; and Saleh said some Englishmen (Messrs Hewlett) had got to the foot of the Hadjar el Bint the year before, but had failed to find the passage, or found it impracticable.

"The whole expedition is timed thus from the convent: six hours camel to the sleeping-place in Wady Rahabeh. (If you have a tent, it will be better to go on to Wady Zeytoun, nearer the actual foot of the mountain; there is a great olive there, a rare sight in the desert, and water.) However, from Wady Rahabeh to the ridge opposite Om Shaumer is three hours; descent to base of Om Shaumer, thirty-five minutes; base of Om Shaumer to top, two hours."

[1] A. Morison, *Relation histor. l.c.* p. 97.

[2] Since Ritter wrote the above, Seetzen's Diary has been published in four vols. at Berlin.—ED.

want of any steps for the feet. He traversed masses of jasper, porphyry, and a very fine-grained granite, till after half an hour he reached a high, precipitous rock, near which is the Ain el Shonnar, or the Spring of the Partridge, in which there was not much water. An hour and a half farther on he reached a less steep and more open spot, on which bushes grew, shortly before eight o'clock, that is, after three hours' climbing. Here the mountain was far less difficult to ascend. On the very summit he found the ruins of a little building, about the size of a room, made of rough stones laid upon each other. This was called the Chapel of St Catherine. The entire flat area of the top was only about twice the size occupied by the ruin. The stone was a hard, fine-grained granite; and the monks looked to find in it the clear traces, on a colossal scale, of the place where the martyr's bones had been laid. Late in the spring as it was, he found snow lying in the crevices of the rocks. The day was cloudy, and he was not rewarded by a distant view: he caught occasional glimpses of the sea; but the prospect northward was closed by the Tih range.

Burckhardt, who ascended in 1816, was more favoured in the day which he chose, and reaped a much larger benefit from the excursion.[1]

Burckhardt's account is as follows:—

"We passed the mid-day hours at St Elias, and towards evening ascended the mountain opposite to that of Mousa, which forms the western cliff of this narrow valley. After proceeding about an hour, we stopped near a small well, where we found several huts of Jebalije, and cleared a place among the rocks, where our party encamped for the night. The well is called Bir Shonnar, from the circumstance of a monk who was wandering in these mountains, and nearly dying of thirst,

[1] Ritter has translated nearly all that Burckhardt wrote (*Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, pp. 569–578) regarding the ascent, notwithstanding the fact that Gesenius had published in 1823 a German edition of the *Travels*, and had made it a familiar work to German readers. Under such authority, I retain the English of Burckhardt; for our edition is in quarto, is rare except in large libraries, and can be transported to the Holy Land only with difficulty. I omit, however, one part quoted by Ritter, the topography of the country around in detail, and the bearings of separate mountains. These Burckhardt set down only for the use of chartographers.—ED.

having miraculously discovered it, by seeing the bird *shonnar* fly up to the spot: it is closely surrounded by rocks, and is not more than a foot in diameter, and as much in depth. The Beduins say that it never dries up, and that its water, even when exposed to the sun, is as cold as ice. Several trees grow near it, amongst others the *zorm*, now almost in full bloom. Its fruit, of the size of a small cherry, with much of the flavour of a strawberry, is, I believe, not a native of Egypt, but is very common in Syria. I bought a lamb of the Beduins, which we roasted among the rocks; and although there were only two women and one girl present, and the steep side of the mountain hardly permitted a person to stand up with firmness, and still less to wheel about, yet the greater part of the night was spent in the *mesámer*, or national song and dance, to which several other neighbouring Jebalije were attracted. The air was delightfully cool and pure. While in the lower country, and particularly on the sea-shore, I found the thermometer often at 102°–105°, and once even at 110°; in the convent it never stood higher than 75°. The Semoum wind never reaches these upper regions. In winter the whole of the upper Sinai is deeply covered with snow, which chokes up many of the passes, and often renders the Mountains of Moses and St Catherine inaccessible. The climate is so different from that of Egypt, that fruits are nearly two months later in ripening here than at Cairo.

"*May* 21*st*.—We left our resting-place before sunrise, and climbed up a steep ascent, where there had formerly been steps, which are now entirely destroyed. This side of Jebel Katerin, or Mount St Catherine, is noted for its excellent pasturage: herbs sprout up everywhere between the rocks; and as many of them are odoriferous, the scent early in the morning, when the dew falls, is delicious. The zattar (*Ocimum zatarhendi*) was particularly conspicuous, and is esteemed here the best possible food for sheep. In the month of June, when the herbs are in blossom, the monks are in the habit of repairing to this and the surrounding mountains, in order to collect various herbs, which they dry and send to the convent at Cairo, from whence they are despatched to the Archbishop of Sinai at Constantinople, who distributes them to his friends and dependents: they are supposed to possess many virtues conducive to health. A botanist would find a rich harvest here; and it

is much to be regretted that two mountains, so easy of access and so rich in vegetation as Sinai and Libanus, should be still unexplored by men of science. The pretty red flower of the Noman plant, the *Euphorbia retusa* of Forskal, abounds in all the valleys of Sinai, and is seen also amongst the most barren granite rocks of the mountains.

"As we approached the summit of the mountain, we saw at a distance a small flock of mountain goats feeding among the rocks. One of our Arabs left us, and by a widely circuitous road endeavoured to get to leeward of them, and near enough to fire at them. He had nearly reached a favourable spot behind a rock when the wind changed, and they smelt him, and suddenly took to flight.

"After a very slow ascent of two hours, we reached the top of Mount St Catherine, which, like the mountain of Moses, terminates in a sharp point: its highest part consists of a single immense block of granite, whose surface is so smooth, that it is very difficult to ascend it. Luxuriant vegetation reaches up to this rock, and the side of the mountain presented a verdure which, had it been of turf instead of shrubs and herbs, would have completed the resemblance between this mountain and some of the Alpine summits. There is nothing on the summit of the rock to attract attention, except a small church or chapel, hardly high enough within to allow a person to stand upright, and badly built of loose uncemented stones: the floor is the bare rock, in which, solid as it is, the body of St Catherine is believed to have been miraculously buried by angels after her martyrdom at Alexandria. I saw inscribed here the names of several European travellers. From this elevated peak a very extensive view opened before us; and the direction of the different surrounding chains of mountains could be distinctly traced. The upper nucleus of the Sinai, composed almost entirely of granite, forms a rocky wilderness, of an irregular circular shape, intersected by many narrow valleys, and from thirty to forty miles in diameter. It contains the highest mountains of the Peninsula, whose shaggy and pointed peaks and steep and shattered sides render it clearly distinguishable from all the rest of the country in view. It is upon this highest region of the Peninsula that the fertile valleys are found which produce fruit-trees: they are principally to the

west and south-west of the convent, at three or four hours' distance. Water, too, is always found in plenty in this district, on which account it is the place of refuge of all the Beduins when the low country is parched up.

"I think it very probable that this upper country, or wilderness, is exclusively the desert of Sinai so often mentioned in the account of the wanderings of the Israelites (Ex. xix. 1, 2; Num. ix. 1, x. 12, etc.). Mount St Catherine appears to stand nearly in the centre of it. To the northward of this central region, and separated from it by the broad valley called Wadi el Sheikh, and by several minor wadis, begins a lower range of mountains, called Zebeir, which extends eastwards, having at one extremity [the western] the two peaks called el-Djoze, above the plantations of Wadi Feiran, and losing itself to the east in the more open country towards Wadi Sal. Beyond the Zebeir northwards are sandy plains and valleys, which I crossed towards the west at Raml el Moral [Debbet er Ramleh], and towards the east about Hadhra [Hazeroth]. This part is the most barren and destitute of water of the whole country. At its eastern extremity it is called el-Birka. It borders to the north on the chain of et-Tih, which stretches in a regular line eastwards, parallel with the Zebeir, beginning at Sarbout e Jemel. On reaching, in its eastern course, the somewhat higher mountain called el-Odjme, it separates into two: one of its branches turns off in a right angle northward, and after continuing for about fifteen miles in that direction, again turns to the east, and extends parallel with the second and southern branch all across the Peninsula towards the southern gulf. The northern branch, which is called el-Dhelel, bounds the view from Mount St Catherine. On turning to the east I found that the mountains in this direction, beyond the high district of Sinai, run in a lower range towards the Wadi Sal, and that the slope of the upper mountains is much less abrupt than on the opposite side. From Sal, east and north-east, the chains intersect each other in many irregular masses of inferior height, till they reach the Gulf of Akaba, which I clearly distinguished, when the sun was just rising over the mountains of the Arabian coast. Excepting the short extent from Noweyba to Dahab, the mountains bordering on the gulf are all of secondary height, but they rise to a considerable elevation beyond these

two points. The country between Sherm, Nobk, and the convent, is occupied also by mountains of minor size; and the valleys generally are so narrow, that few of them can be distinguished from the point where I stood,—the whole country in that direction appearing an uninterrupted wilderness of barren mountains.

"The view to the south was bounded by the high mountain of Om Shomar, which forms a nucleus of itself, apparently unconnected with the upper Sinai, although bordering close upon it. To the right of this mountain I could distinguish the sea, in the neighbourhood of Tor, near which begins a low calcareous chain of mountains called Jebel Hemam, *i.e.* Death, extending along the Gulf of Suez, and separated from the upper Sinai by a broad gravelly plain called el-Kaa, across which the road from Tor to Suez passes. This plain terminates to the w.s.w. of Mount St Catherine, and nearly in the direction of Jebel Serbal. Towards the Kaa the central Sinai mountains are very abrupt, and leave no intermediate secondary chain between them and the plain at their feet. The mountain of Serbal, which I afterwards visited, is separated from the upper Sinai by some valleys, especially Wadi Hebran; and it forms, with several neighbouring mountains, a separate cluster, terminating in peaks, the highest of which appears to be as high as Mount St Catherine. It borders on the Wadi Feiran and the chain of Zebeir.

"We returned from Mount St Catherine to the place where we had passed the night, and breakfasted with the Jebalije, for which payment was asked and readily given. The conveying of pilgrims is one of the few modes of subsistence which these poor people possess; and at a place where strangers are continually passing, gratuitous hospitality is not to be expected from them, though they might be ready to afford it to the helpless traveller. The two days' excursion to the holy places cost me about forty piastres, or seven English shillings."

Schimper[1] explored Mount St Catherine in repeated visits, and has added something to what Burckhardt has given, especially as to the botany of the district. He found the flora of St Catherine in many respects different from that of Sinai, and altogether more abundant. For five months in the year,

[1] W. Schimper, *Nachricht von seiner Sinai-Reise*, in manuscript.

he tells us, the mountain—which, according to Russegger, is 8168 feet high—is covered with snow. In June and August he found the primrose in bloom in some of the most secluded places on the northern slope of the mountain. He has given us no exhaustive account of the flora of St Catherine, for it would have taken three or four months to complete a botanical survey of the whole, since it is so difficult climbing, and since the plants are not found together, as in cultivated districts, but so much isolated as to make it impossible to secure a satisfactory number of specimens. The whole country, it must be borne in mind, is a desert; there is not such a thing as a rich meadow, such as are found around the European Alps. There is not a single place in the Sinai district where the vegetation is so abundant, that you cannot plainly see the sand or the gravel underlying it. Only in a very few places do palm trees thrive, —as, for example, in the Wadi Feiran, in the neighbourhood of Tor, at some spots on the eastern shore of Ras Mohammed, near Dahab, Nuweiba, and Akaba, and in the Wadi Kyd; but they do not ascend so high as the upper Sinai. Nor does the tarfa tree leave the lower and warmer valleys. Only here and there a wild fig tree (*homad*) is found on some more favoured eminence: a few cypresses and fruit-trees have been imported into the region, and sedulously cultivated; and on Horeb, St Catherine, and Om Shomar, hawthorn bushes, and a few others, struggle to get a foot-hold; but there is not the trace of a tree—nothing but aromatic shrubs.

The result of Ruppell's[1] ascent was to confirm Burckhardt's topographical survey; and as the air was singularly clear on the day when he was there, he was able to sharpen some of the former's observations, and make them even more full for chartographical purposes. He went provided with a barometer, and ascertained the height to be 8100 Paris feet.

Russegger,[2] a mineralogist, has explored the mountain geologically, and has given in detail the results of his investigations. He also ascertained the height with more exactness than Ruppell, and also noticed the gradual rising, as it were in a succession of terraces, of the Peninsula from north-west to

[1] Ruppell, *Reise in Abyssin.* Frankf. 1838, Pt. i. pp. 121–123.

[2] J. Russegger, *i. a. l. Allgem. Zeitung*, 20th February 1839, No. 52, *Beilage.*

south-east, culminating, as he supposed, in Mount St Catherine. The ten measurements which he has given us in confirmation of this are as follows. The standard is the level of the Red Sea:—

	Feet.
1. The plateau of Debbe,	1507
2. Wadi Nasseb,	1291
3. Wadi Chomile,	2074
4. Wadi Borak,	2849
5. Wadi Oesh,	3500
6. Saheb plateau, at the foot of Sinai,	5115
7. Convent of el-Arbain,	5464
8. Jebel Musa, at the cross,	5956
9. Jebel Horeb, at the ruins of the convent,	7097
10. Jebel Catherine,	8168

The ascent of Robinson adds little to what had already been accomplished by previous travellers. He calls the cleft through which he passed up from the Ledja by the name Shû Musa, "Cleft of Moses," which we hear in his narrative for the first time. He also saw two large rocks having inscriptions upon them; these had escaped the keen and vigilant Burckhardt, although they were noticed by Lord Lindsay, who was there the same year with Robinson. Robinson's remarks on the topographical details of the landscape are valuable, and the more so because the names which he uses are now more familiar to us than in the form given by his predecessors. He calls special attention to a wadi called Tulâ, which is formed by the confluence of two wadis west of St Catherine, one of which, Um Kûraf, runs parallel with the Ledja. The Wadi Tûla runs along the western base of the northern spur or projection of St Catherine, which takes the name first of Humr, then of Gubsheh, and lastly (when west of the Hauwi Pass) of Sern. It debouches into the Wadi Rudhwâh, which in its turn runs into the Wadi Selâf, the ordinary course of travel. This long pass, that of Wadi Tulâ, has never been explored, and it is much to be wished that some future traveller would bestow attention on it.

Robinson tells us that the broad unbroken panoramic view from the summit of St Catherine is far finer than that from Sinai, which is ascended in an hour and a half, and which lies more than a thousand feet below it, and that no visitor who wishes to command a noble view of the whole country which the Israelites traversed should fail to visit it.

3. *Ascent of Horeb and Sinai.*

Seetzen is the first traveller who has ascended both peaks of Sinai, and who has not, like the thousands of pilgrims who preceded him, kept his attention fixed only on the countless stations which the monks point out, each one of which is made conspicuous by some hallowed tradition. The glass has been so discoloured by the traditions of many ages, that the eye is now hardly able to see through it and discern the clear outline of the truth. We know how difficult it is in our familiar home scenes to disentangle that which is authentic from that which has been tinged with fable; and how readily many accept the false, rather than search for the true. And still more is this the case in a land so ancient as that which we are now studying, where undisputed traditions have long clothed each cleft in the rocks, and each splintered summit, with some idle monkish fancy, not allowed to die, but taken up by the credulous Arab, and become more widely spread, and more ridiculously, if one may not say seriously, distorted. The whole region swims before the eyes with fantastic legends, and it requires more effort to break through them than it does to climb the steep hills or wander over the arid plains.

Pococke has recorded all these legends in his work, where they may be sought by the curious; and he had the good sense to arrange them topographically, so that they are of some service. But it was Carsten Niebuhr who, if he could have effected his purpose of ascending the mountain, would have given us in his masterly way the best account of the whole region. The want has never been supplied.

What Niebuhr could give, may be condensed into the few following words:—The mountain is very steep on the side which is generally ascended, that on the east where the convent stands. It must in ancient times have been climbed with great difficulty; but the cutting out of the steps in the rock within modern date has effected a great change in this regard. About a hundred steps above the convent there is a fine spring, which being shaded by a rock, which it takes five hundred steps to mount, is always cool. From the top of this rock it is a thousand steps farther to a little chapel, and thence five hundred to the Chapel of Elijah, near which stand two trees.

From this point, which was as far as Niebuhr was allowed to go, it is probably a thousand steps to the summit. Niebuhr was quick enough in his observations to get a glimpse of the situation of Tor, and this one point enabled chartographers to assign the right location to Sinai on the maps. Following the accounts of the Arabs, who designated the whole district south-east of the Wadi Feiran as the Jebel Musa, the Mountains of Moses, and the mountain at the convent as Tur Sina, Niebuhr was led to consider the latter as the one where the law was given, and to remark with great sagacity, that "if the whole Israelite camp had not room on this [the north] side of Sinai, there may be large plains on the other side, or they may have encamped a part around the mountain, and a part in the Wadi Faran."

(1.) *The Pilgrims' Path to Horeb (Chorif).*

Seetzen's account of his visit to Sinai has unfortunately never been published, and cannot therefore be compared by the general reader with that of Burckhardt. Seetzen is, however, one of the most competent observers who have ever explored that region.

Seetzen left[1] the convent on the 16th of April 1807, in company with his servant, a monk, the convent Arabs of the Jebalije tribe, three Beduins, and two boys to carry provisions. They all took date alpine stocks; for the rocks immediately behind the convent are very steep, until after a half-hour's climbing the little spring is reached, the waters of which fill a basin at the monastery below. From there he ascended, after an hour's march, the eminence on which stands the Chapel of the Holy Virgin, and ten minutes later he reached a gate spanning a narrow passage in the rocks, partly hewed out of the solid stone, and partly builded by masonry. Five minutes later he encountered another gate, beyond and above which a small plateau or terrace extends, surrounded by high rock masses. This point was reached after an hour and a quarter's climbing. A fine spring was found there, and a little water basin, near which a single cypress was growing, not two as at Niebuhr's visit, though the superior said that he could remember the time when there were three. Near the spring there was a small

[1] Seetzen's manuscript account.

quantity of low shrubs, and a ruined chapel called by the name of Elijah. There was nothing to be seen of the remains of other chapels, although their names were assigned to different localities thereabout. Here the party took a little rest, and breakfasted.

The side which they had ascended, called by the guide Chorif, *i.e.* Horeb, was uncommonly steep, with here and there perfectly precipitous passages. Seetzen thinks it would have been inaccessible if a way had not been constructed up to the little plateau just mentioned, partly by laying rough stones in convenient positions, and partly by hewing steps in the rock,—a difficult undertaking in dealing with a hard red granite. One of the sharp peaks which rise at the side of the plain where Seetzen now was, was called by the name of Horeb proper; but as it was lower than one more to the south, and as the guides asserted that nothing remarkable was to be found there, he did not ascend it, but chose the southern one, called Jebel Musa.

The same route was taken by all who followed him, and their accounts do not differ essentially from his. In most cases they are a mere repetition of it. Whatever they have added to the result of his observations I will indicate below.

Burckhardt found on the rocks around the small plain, where the spring is, and where the olive trees once stood, a number of Arabic inscriptions, some of them three and four hundred years old, cut into the stone by Arabian pilgrims, and also one Syrian one. He says that the gates, which were in ruins at the time of his visit, used formerly to be closed. As early as 1697, when Morison[1] made his visit thither, these gates had fallen; but he tells us that at the first one, pilgrims had been accustomed to receive the holy wafer, and at the second, absolution and the certificate of their pilgrimage. Permission was granted to them only to visit the Chapel of Elijah, and no one could go beyond the second gate. De Laborde, who had carefully collated the authorities bearing on the subject, tells us that the gates were intended to be a dividing line between Horeb and Sinai, and that the lower or northern portion of the whole long mountain is to be designated by the former word, the southern or higher part by the latter.

Pilgrims were permitted to take away and to carry home

[1] A. Morison, *Chanoine, Relation historique d'un Voyage nouv. fait au Mont Sinai et à Jerusalem*, Toul. 1704.

little twigs of the cypress trees growing there; and near the present solitary dark green pyramid-shaped rock there used once to stand a number of olive and fig trees. Indeed, in 1697 Morison rested in their shade.

Burckhardt says that it is conformable both to the Koran and to Mohammedan tradition, that this part of the mountain was Horeb, the place where the law was given. At certain times the monks assembled there to celebrate mass: the Jews, too, regard it as a hallowed spot, because of the Chapel of Elijah which is there, of which Macrizi, writing very early, makes mention.

Robinson's account first led geographers to the perception that it is through a narrow gorge leading up from the convent that travellers reach the two gates; and that the so-called plateau or plain on the top is a gentle slope along the ridge of the mountain, connecting the northern with the southern summits, and that from this connecting link a steep path leads down to el-Arbain in the Ledja. This gives the aspect of cross roads to the mountain,—the one running north and south along the ridge, the other east and west over the middle of the mountain, and connecting the Convent of St Catherine with the ruined Convent of el-Arbain.

What Burckhardt called a stone basin to collect the winter's rain, Robinson found to be a real well, regularly laid with stones, and of considerable depth. The solitary cypress near by, and the inscriptions on the rock, give the place a romantic and historical interest. This cypress is, according to Schimper, not only remarkable for its height, but for the size of its trunk. Coutelle says that in 1800, at the height of four feet from the ground, it was eight and a half feet in circumference.

The spot where the cypress and the well are found lies 1400 hundred feet above the convent, according to Schubert, and 6126 feet above the sea. The sloping plateau or back of the mountain spans the whole distance between the two peaks at the extremities. Along its course, as one goes northward, are met four ruins of chapels or hermitages, where some of St Antony's pupils are said once to have dwelt. On the western rim of the mountain are also the Chapels of St John the Baptist and of St Panteleemon. The old Chapel of Elijah, Robinson considers to have once been a convent. From the

swell where it stands, Sinai, the southern peak, first becomes distinctly visible.

Despite all the various applications which have been made of the word Horeb, through the middle ages and up to our own time, to what we now call Sinai, Horeb, and St Catherine, I prefer to follow in this case the old legend, which places it near the chapel called by the name of Elijah, and the small opening in the rocks which is said to have given him shelter during his stay. We read in 1 Kings xix. 8, 9, that he came to Horeb and lodged all night in a cave; and in the lack of more evidence than we have of the original spot, there is enough to justify the legend in fixing it where it has. Not inappropriate to the place which we are now considering, and full of such sublimity as we should expect to find connected with that mountain height, are the words of the original narrative which record the command of Jehovah, to "go forth, and stand upon the mount of the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering of the cave: and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Here, then, is the Horeb of Christian pilgrims: their Sinai, the Mountain of the Giving of the Law, is to the south. The name Horeb is unknown to the Arabs, but Sinai they call both Jebel Musa and Tur Sina. At the Chapel of Elijah the legends of the Arabs may entwine with Christian legends of former days, since they are accustomed to call the way from Jerusalem thither the Derb Helele, *i.e.* the Path of Elijah.

The loftier part of Horeb lies an hour's hard walking farther north, surrounded by sharp peaks or craggy points, rising some hundreds of feet farther in the air, particularly on the west side and above the Ledja gorge. The part between these towering crags is about five hundred feet of precipitous descent in the er-Raha plain. This is called Ras el Sufsafeh by the Arabs. It had no connection with the legends nor the stations which from time immemorial have directed the course of pil-

grims. Seetzen did not visit it because he was told that there is "nothing remarkable" about it. Even Burckhardt did not go to it. Robinson was the first to explore it. He could not reconcile the southern extremity of the mountain, the present Sinai of Christians, with the statements of Scripture; and in order to satisfy his curiosity he climbed with great difficulty this northern portion, visiting first the western side, and then the eastern. The view from the former did not satisfy him; but when, after much toil, he had surmounted the lofty peaks on the north side of Ras es Sufsâfeh, rising up in their sharp spires and columns and crags, like the ruins of a rich but crumbling piece of colossal architecture, he was rewarded by a noble view. The whole plain er-Raha, the entrances to all the wadis, and especially el-Sheikh, were all in sight, and it was clear to him that this was the place where the Lord descended in fire, and smoke, and earthquake, and the voice of a trumpet, so that all the people trembled.

Only the northern precipitous slope, where the people on the plain could come and touch the very face of the mountain, was kept sacred from the hands of the Israelites under penalty of death. From the plain er-Raha the whole wonderful event could be seen, and yet without having Sinai, the southern peak, at all within the view, since it is completely hidden by the northern craggy sides of the mountain. Robinson, in taking this view, had not a single legend, not a single tradition, on his side: he broke the ground afresh, but he pleaded his cause ably. Lepsius, who does not adopt the view that Sinai was the mount of the law-giving at all, but that it was Serbal, is one of the few who have taken the pains to ascend the difficult steeps which Robinson ascended, and he has not hesitated to confirm the remarkable aspect of the plain from that point. Yet Lepsius hesitates about accepting Robinson's view, on the very account that it was so steep, thinking that the difficult ascent, as well as the lack of water, would be sufficient reasons for doubting whether Moses ascended thither to receive the divine commands.

We will leave Horeb at this point, and take the pilgrims and the legends for our guides along a way which Lepsius very shrewdly compares to a pleasure-walk threading its way among the most sublime objects of nature, where every little ruin,

every crumbling wall, has its story, and every resting-place its tale of kings and heroes, and wondrous deeds.

(2.) *The Pilgrims' Path to Mount Sinai.*

Sinai can only be ascended from the back of the mountain, sloping northward; in other words, by way of the little plateau on which stands the Chapel of Elijah, for its southern slope is precipitous. From the north the summit cannot be seen till Horeb is reached, and at the convent neither the peaks of Sinai nor of St Catherine are visible. The height of the mountain has been variously estimated, but the English measurement, taken from the Gulf of Akaba, is about 7500 feet.

Near the Chapels of Elijah and Elisha, and at an impression in the rock which the fancy of the Arabs ascribes to the foot-prints of Mohammed's camel (as also with similar marks at Cairo, Mecca, Damascus, and even in Central Africa), the traveller comes to a succession of steps, consisting of unhewn stones, which have been laid there by man, and, passing these, at length arrives at the summit of Jebel Musa, which, according to Burckhardt, is only sixty paces in circumference, and consists of one granite rock, but which, according to Robinson, is eighty feet in diameter. It rises the highest on the east side, where stand the ruins of a church—the goal of all Christian pilgrimages; for there, the legends of the place assert, the law was given. South-west from this, and twenty or thirty steps off, on a second little eminence, stand the ruins of a mosque. Both of these are insignificant buildings; and their destruction is attributed, especially in the case of the church, to the wanton conduct of some Towara Beduins, in revenging themselves upon the monks of the convent for withholding an allowance from them to which they were not in any way entitled. Yet the chapel was half fallen in as early as Seetzen's time. It seems to have formerly been divided into two parts, the one for Greek and the other for Roman Catholics. When Seetzen was there the mosque was in good condition; and not far from it, a little farther down, was a small grotto, to which some steps led. Burckhardt calls this a very fine basin cut in the solid rock to receive rain-water, unless he means to indicate another basin between the two ruined buildings, and which was noticed by Wellsted as well as by Ruppell, who calls it the cistern of

the mosque, and in which he found excellent water. At Pococke's time this was arched over. The Arabs make pilgrimages to the mosque, and offer as a sacrifice what they call "Moses' sheep," offering vows and prayers for his intercession. They celebrate also a feast at the same place, offering sacrifices also; and, according to Burckhardt, even Mohammed Ali had the intention of making a pilgrimage to the mosque with his son. According to Pococke, the Arabs have a legend that Mohammed once fasted here forty days. We well know, from repeated passages in the Koran, that the prophet followed very closely the model of Moses. On the top of the mountain the Beduin finds the footsteps of the founder of his faith, and reverently kneels and kisses the hallowed spot.

The so-called Chapel of Moses, which stands upon the eastern side of the summit, appeared to Wellsted to have been constructed from materials furnished by a still older edifice. Turner[1] insisted that the stones of which it is composed were hewed blocks of granite, which were not indigenous to Sinai, but which had been brought thither from Horeb. Lepsius, too, thinks that he saw stones more anciently hewed than the evident duration of the present chapel can justify; and Burckhardt was of the opinion, that the scattered fragments strewn around on the summit warrant the conclusion, that a much larger church once stood there than the little chapel which stands in its present dilapidated condition. The monks told Seetzen, that prior to the erection of the present Convent of St Catherine the monastery of their order stood upon the summit; and he remarked that this statement was confirmed by the discovery there of sundry bits of hewn marble and of granite fragments, far more skilfully hewn than the recent possibilities of art in that place could account for. Von Schubert supposes that the mosque was built from the materials furnished by the ancient Christian structure, and he strengthens his conviction by the statement that fragments of marble are still to be seen in the masonry on Sinai. Yet this can hardly have been a church built by Justinian, as von Schubert supposes. De Laborde attributes these remains to a time earlier than Justinian's.

The little grotto under the mosque, to which a number of steps descend, Seetzen represents as covered with a large granite

[1] W. Turner, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, Lond. 1820.

block, on which he found an inscription which he was unable to decipher. Other travellers have made no particular mention of the place. Wellsted remarks, and Robinson confirms it, that the rocks around are covered with the names of pilgrims, most of them illegible, and written apparently in Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and even Armenian. Within the chapel is to be seen written with pencil, E. Ruppell, 7th May 1831, 12 hours 15 min.; barometer, 21° 7′ 6″; therm. 13¼° Reaum.

Burckhardt tells us that the Arabs still cherish the delusion that the tables of stone on which the law was written are concealed under the floor of the little chapel on the summit of Mount Sinai, and that they have made repeated efforts to exhume them. Another superstition which they hold is, that the rain which falls throughout the whole Peninsula is under the direct supervision of Moses; and they are under the conviction that the monks are in possession of the book Taourat, which was sent from heaven to Moses, and that rain falls or not according as that book is open or closed. They also point out a rough depression in one of the highest blocks or sharp points which rise from the summit of Sinai, and call it the mark made by Moses when he turned away from God in fear. A tourist—L. de Suchem, quoted by Laborde—has given so graphic and naive a picture of this impression in the rock, that I transcribe it. He says: "Near the chapel, and in the place where the glory of God appeared to Moses, there is a hole in the hard rock, by looking into which you can see the likeness of the prophet just as clearly as if you were looking into a looking-glass. In this cavity he stood, and God covered it with His right hand while He was passing by."

Seetzen and Burckhardt were upon the mountain on days when the atmosphere was too thick to allow them a good view. Ruppell was more favoured. He describes the prospect as much shut in on the east, south, and west by the overtopping of other mountains; but the northern outlook was good, revealing a broad, distant landscape, a yellow sandy country at his feet, traversed by low, black porphyritic ridges, in the strongest contrast with the wild, jagged peaks directly around him. He took the meridianal bearings of the leading objects in view, and the data furnished by him were of essential service to Robinson in the construction of his map. Ruppell ascertained

Sinai to be composed of vertical layers of a fine-grained grey granite, made up of feldspar, quartz, and very little mica: between the lower rocks he found a considerable growth of plants suitable for the pasturage of goats. Yet, despite this, he describes the whole aspect of Sinai, destitute of brooks, and of verdure in the ordinary sense, as exceedingly gloomy, in which Schimper concurs, comparing the flora of St Catherine with that of Sinai, manifestly to the advantage of the former. Russegger informs us that the rock at the base of Sinai is mainly a red, coarse granite, but that it changes at the summit to a white, fine granite, giving the mountain the appearance, at a distance, of being composed of two different kinds of material. Von Schubert, the botanist, was here at too unfavourable a time of year (March) to pass a valuable judgment on the flora of the mountain; for at that season not even the *Phlomis aurea*, the *avorvor* of the Arabs, comes into blossom, with its pretty golden flowers. Of aromatic shrubs there seems to be no special lack, and mint, marjoram, and savory are found. The hyssop was also pointed out by the superior of the convent; the same plant, it is probable, with that alluded to by Moses (Ex. xii. 22; Lev. xiv. 4; Num. xix. 6). It is a species of *teucrium polium* with notched and hairy leaves; the same shrub, it may be, as that called hyssop by Robinson, and known by the Arabs as Ja'deh.

The view from the summit cannot compare, even under the clearest sky, with that from St Catherine, and hence travellers who have interested themselves in making a topographical survey of the whole Peninsula have made little account of it. But the very fact that Sinai is so overtopped by loftier peaks, gives the view from its summit its own peculiar charms. Shut in as the observer is, he can better study the strange wildness and sublimity of this little cluster of naked mountains, and get a better conception of the strange elemental forces which produce so haggard a scene, than if upon a loftier summit and with a wider view. Sir Francis Henniker has very truly and finely said, that it seemed to him, as he surveyed the wild picture before him, as if it had once been an ocean of boiling lava, cooled and fixed in its present form by a single mandate of the Most High.

Yet, though the view from Sinai towards the east, south, and west is comparatively limited, in consequence of the greater

height of the outlying peaks, the view is by no means inconsiderable, nor to be dismissed with a hasty passing word. It is not quite all that Laborde has said of it, and it is true that its neighbour Serbal cannot be seen from it; but parts of the coast of Africa, among them the Ras Attaka at Suez, have been distinguished. Both of the arms of the Red Sea can be seen, although only in glimpses. "Close before me," says Wellsted, "rose St Catherine with its bare, wedge-shaped peak, wearing a snow cap even yet upon its head. For many years, in the course of repeated voyages made in all the waters adjacent to this region, I had been accustomed to look at all these mountain systems from every point of view, but the loftiness of the Sinai group gave it at once a special character. Rising in sharp, isolated wedges, enormous masses of rock have detached themselves from time to time, and have fallen, giving rise to deep clefts, gorges, and ravines, which break through the whole district, and give it the wildest aspect. The highest summits are filled with snow in the winter, which, melting in spring, fills the channels of countless brooks, and sweeps with mad and devastating violence through all the mountain passes, carrying away whatever little soil may have accumulated. The lofty wedge shape brings the peaks of the Sinai group in sharp contrast with those of the other long low ridges of the Peninsula. No resting-places for man, no villages, no castles, give animation to the scene, as in European mountain regions; no lake, no clear river, no waterfall, no forest, break the monotony of solitude. Everywhere there is seen only the wide, empty wilderness—grey, dark brown, black; in the extreme distance, the bright sea of sand. There is nothing to give an interest to the scene except the mighty Recollection of the Past: this throws over it all a dark and deep and mysterious charm."

With this harmonizes von Schubert's graphic and touching sketch of the scene,—a place which has become hallowed ground to three of the chief religions on the earth, revered alike in church and mosque, and made sacred by the memorials of centuries. I shall not be making my account too long, therefore, if I quote the words of my excellent friend.

"We had ascended," says von Schubert, "the mountain which to the larger half of the people on the earth is a sacred spot—to Jews, Moslems, and Christians alike. The view from

that great height over the broad tract at the north, and the jagged rim of the panorama, made all the more sharp and distinct by the deep blue Arabian sky, give the scene its eminence. Southward and eastward there are to be caught glimpses of that sea which bounds the Peninsula on two of its sides, and beyond, in the distance, are to be seen the Arabian and the Egyptian coasts. Lying between them there is no green meadow, no tilled field, no forest, no brook, no village, no Alpine hut. Only the sound of storm and thunder is heard in the waste of Sinai; all else is silent, and the whole scene remains as it was left on the third day of creation, when there was no green thing upon the earth. Where can there be a better place to explore the difficult questions of geological science than this, which has never witnessed any change, either from vegetable growth or from the deposit of later formations? Here the gorges can be filled with no clay, nor sandstone, and the lines of wacke can be traced for hours along the rocky roads and up the steep mountain-sides. In such a place as this was the law given—the law that leads to Christ, who is the fulfilment of the law,—here, in the birthplace of three great nationalities."

Regarding the special objects to be descried from the summit of Sinai, von Schubert gives the following complete sketch:—

At the north-west the Isthmus of Suez can be discerned: still nearer Suez can itself be seen as a dark point, and near it Ras Attaka. Farther to the west the sight is limited by the heights of Mokkateb and the Serbal groups (according to Robinson, Serbal itself not being visible); but between these groups the sea can be distinguished. Beyond the Serbal and Mokkateb ranges, however, von Schubert thought that he had glimpses of the Kolzum mountains, the ancient residence of Egyptian anchorites; and nearly in the range of St Catherine, but far away, he fancied that he made out the Agarib range (the Ghorib) in Egypt. The most of the arc between west and south is spanned by the towering and ragged St Catherine, which lifts itself aloft like some dark storm-cloud, and is plainly seen to be many hundred feet higher than Sinai. Seetzen says that it is amazing how so many people have been unable to make two mountains out of these, and have described them as one, in spite of the deep Ledja lying between them, the gorge in

which stand the ruins of the old Convent el-Arbain. Farther to the left are to be seen the southern spurs of Om Shomar (Laborde thought the mighty peak itself could be discerned, but it is invisible from Sinai): exactly at the south can be seen the peak of Mohala, not mentioned by any other traveller than von Schubert. At the right as well as at the left of this, may be seen the sea washing the southern point of the Peninsula. At the right the sight is lost amid the glancing waters; but at the left, in the extreme distance, the mountains of the Arabian coast and the island of Tiran may be descried.

From the south to east the sight is limited by the Nebeky or Nekb mountains, which run along the Peninsula itself, and form its eastern rim. Still farther eastward may be seen strips of sand having the appearance of water; then follow mountains in the direction of Midian, the country of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law.

Farther northward the Gulf of Akaba is to be seen (though Seetzen and Lepsius did not discover it), and exactly at the north the sandy uplands of the Tih desert.

Directly around Sinai, and in immediate contiguity with it, parts of the Ledja gorge can be seen, though not the ruins of el-Arbain: at the south the Wadi Sebaijeh, and more eastward the Keeper's Mountain, or the Sebaijeh, over which runs the path already mentioned, and where Moses is supposed to have kept the sheep of Jethro; and north of that point, the heights of ed-Deir. At the north, the eye wanders along the back of Horeb directly at the observer's feet, and descries in the distance the steep cliffs north of the Raha plain, but of that plain it does not get a single glimpse.

We are now able to understand that expression of Robinson, in which he says, "My first and prevailing feeling on the summit of Sinai was one of disappointment." He had ascended under the conviction that only the plain er-Raha could harbour so vast a multitude as the children of Israel, at the time of the giving of the law, so that the mighty spectacle might be witnessed by all at once. And taking that plain for granted as the scene of their encampment, he saw that the peak of the traditional Sinai was entirely invisible from it; and, moreover, that no part of the plain er-Raha can be seen from Sinai, and therefore the people could not be witnesses of the descent of the Lord on the third day. This would only be possible on

the north brow of the mountain, the Ras Sufsafeh of Horeb; and this must therefore have been the scene of the law-giving, although tradition does not in any way acknowledge it. Robinson goes on to reason: there is no ground for the belief that the peak which now bears the name of Moses (Jebel Musa proper) ever had any biblical connection with the great lawgiver; and that, as the Scripture is the best guide even in geographical matters, its own evidence, so contrary to that of tradition, is to be followed in preference to the latter: the tradition is a mere after-work of man. And Lord Lindsay, too, was just as dissatisfied as Robinson with the attempts to make the scene of the traditional law-giving harmonize with the manifest arrangements of nature, and the historical records of the Bible.

But the investigations of later explorers have cleared up the whole difficulty, and have showed that not alone on the north side of Horeb lies a plain large enough for the encampment of so mighty a host as Israel, but that on the south side of the mountain there is one no less large, into which the broad and spacious Wadi Sebaijeh leads from the Wadi el Sheikh; and that before this vast plain the mighty pyramid of Sinai towers just as visibly as the Ras Sufsafeh in sight of the plain er-Raha, for which no ancient tradition declares its testimony, and whose ragged points are not connected with architectural remains and inscriptions which run back into ante-Byzantian and ante-Mohammedan times.

Leon de Laborde, in his independent work,[1] was the first to call attention to the large plain at the south foot of Sinai, and to show the harmony of the whole place with the old traditions of the spot. And, after a careful weighing of the question (with regard to Serbal we shall speak in another place),

[1] L. de Laborde, *Commentaire sur l'Exode*, Append. pp. 1, 41, etc. Ritter's language is so strong in this passage, and Robinson's researches have been stamped with such signal marks of approbation—not of course implying the acceptance of all his positions—that I venture to quote a little of Laborde's severe language, as his work is not in the hands of every reader. He says: "Le titre d'ouvrage de M. Robinson excita vivement ma curiosité: La Palestine et les pays qui l'avoisinent au sud; voyage exécuté en 1838 par M. Edouard Robinson, Docteur et Professeur de Théologie à New York.—Je m'attendais, de la part du professeur, à un travail biblique, profond et serré dans le genre de recherches de W. Leake, sur la

we are compelled to adopt his conclusions as decisive. But though we coincide with his results, we cannot at all approve of his undignified and unrighteous invective against the great services of his opponent, my honoured friend Edward Robinson, who is just as independent as he, and just as careful an observer, let it here once for all be said, and with the deepest conviction of my soul.

Laborde, after tracing the course of the children of Israel from the Red Sea to the foot of Sinai, says that they encamped in the valleys in the vicinity of the mountain [*le peuple d'Israël campa dans les vallées qui environt le Sinaï*], and justifies his view by citing Ex. xix. 2, "For they were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness: and there Israel camped before the mount." But this could be true of the south side of the mountain, as will be seen by recurring to the Scripture narrative (Ex. xix. 16–20): "And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And

Grèce, et de la part du docteur, à quelque belles pages remplis d'enthousiasme et de piété fervente, comme l'ouvrage de Schubert en contient avec profusion. Au lieu de ce merite et de ces qualités, je trouve un pénible récit de petits évènements personnels, qui pouvaient être interessants à une époque où ces contrées étaient moins connus et plus dangereuses à parcourir, mais qui ne sont plus bons aujourd'hui que pour un cercle restreint d'amis et de parents.

"Je trouve ainsi dans ces recherches, où se fait sentir une compilation trop hâtive, une prétention à la science qui remplace l'intérêt du récit par des hypothèses rarement justes sur la position des anciennes villes: enfin, une manie d'observations astronomiques qui ne s'explique pas sans instruments de mathématiques, et des renseignements sur les niveaux et les hauteurs, qui semblent pourtant difficiles à obtenir sans baromètres." He proceeds in this view at great length; but this is enough to justify the just and weighty condemnation of Ritter.—Ed.

the Lord came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up."

Now the plain of Sebaijeh corresponds exactly with the necessities of the children of Israel on that occasion, being large enough to accommodate a mighty multitude, and lying at the very foot of Sinai, which towers up in an unbroken perpendicular wall of 2000 feet to the point now crowned with the mosque, the ruined Christian chapel, and the crag called the Rock of Moses—all plainly visible from below.

No other locality in the whole Peninsula seems to answer the conditions of the Scripture narrative better than this; yet even this makes it necessary to give a certain limited interpretation to the words "the people" in the account of the law-giving, that not all the people are meant, but only the greater part, or a very large part of them. Not even in the large northern plain er-Raha would there be sufficient room to accommodate millions of men, women, and children, with their cattle and flocks; and the Mosaic account by no means compels us to suppose that all were together on a plain which, large as it is in itself considered, is yet relatively but a very little place. We read in Ex. xix. 2, "They had pitched in the wilderness: and there Israel camped before the mount." This language justifies the belief that they filled not the plain alone, but the adjacent wadis, the Wadi Sheikh, the Raha plain, the Ledja, the Wadi Sebaijeh; and this they must have done in order to get food and water for their flocks and herds. In Ex. xix. 17 we read, "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God." Now there would have been near their camp no other open space for them to use as they were going out of the camp to "meet with God," or as they were drawing back with fear at the thunder and the lightning (Ex. xx. 18, 21), unless there were a broad passage leading to another plain beside the one where the law was received. All the people, not even if numbering hundreds of thousands instead of millions, could have possibly defiled in one day through such narrow gorges as are all the wadis, even the broadest, of the Sinai group, and reach the mountain of law-giving. The thought seems most naturally suggested, therefore, that it is only a part, though possibly a great part, perhaps the most

important of the tribes, or the oldest persons, whom Moses means to designate by the words "the people" and "all the people". (and vers. 7, 8 in the nineteenth chapter give much colour to the inference) in such passages as Ex. xix. 2, "And there Israel camped before the mount." But a great part of whatever difficulty lies here is removed by the conjecture, that the broad Wadi Sebaijeh would serve as an admirable road for those who were encamped on the north side of the mountain to pass readily round and join the great mass encamped on the Sebaijeh plain, and as a ready means of withdrawal when the scene became so grand and fearful, that the terrified multitude "removed and stood afar off."

Von Schubert speaks particularly of "looking down into the Wadi Sebaijeh from Sinai," but he failed to catch the conception of its probable former use to the children of Israel, as I have just indicated it. Yet he gives us this valuable piece of information, that at the south-western corner of the Sebaijeh plain there is a passage leading at the outset west-south-west, and making the circuit of the whole southern extremity of Sinai, entering the Ledja, and so debouching into the Bostan valley on the northern side. And Schimper in his manuscript account confirms this, and tells us that in his botanical tours he was able to start at the convent in the morning, and in the course of an easy day's walk pass around the whole of Horeb and Sinai without meeting any more important obstructions in the way than two or three unimportant hills, such as that called the Keeper's Mountain, over which the path from the convent valley leads to the Sebaijeh plain. In no other travellers' accounts do we find any allusions to this quadrangular form of Sinai, and the possibility of passing around it in this way.

Earlier visitors to those regions make almost no allusion to the Wadi Sebaijeh; it was wholly overlooked. Even Laborde makes no mention of it in the account of his journey to Petra, and in the map accompanying that work even the Sebaijeh plain plays a very subordinate part. He unquestionably saw it on his return from Sherm to the convent, yet did not allude to it in his itinerary, and it is only in the *Commentary on Exodus* that his first map of it as a place of importance appears.

Tischendorf, at his ascent of Sinai, directed some attention[1]

[1] C. Tischendorf, *Travels in the East.*

to both of the plains at its base, but paid no special attention to topographical details. And we have not even yet any detailed map bringing before the eye the clear relations of all the parts of that labyrinth of mountains and wadis which surrounds Mount Sinai. It is the more to be regretted, therefore, that the Royal Geographical Society of London did not see fit to publish the detailed sketch of the vicinity of the Sinai convent which accompanied the valuable itinerary of so close an observer as Baron Koller:[1]—

"On the east, and not far away below us, was the Wadi Sebaije, which reposes there between the steep walls which hem it in. North-west of it, where the path leading to the convent enters it, this wadi is bounded by the Keeper's Mountain, where the legend tells us that Moses tended Jethro's sheep. This Wadi Sebaije, or more strictly Sebaije Plain, is supposed to have been the camping ground of the children of Israel at the time of the law-giving. It is broad and large, and well adapted to such an event. It also gives a manifest interpretation to the words, 'Whosoever toucheth the mount, shall surely be put to death.' In the Sebaije plain the mountain can be literally touched (Robinson adduces the same argument for the northern face), since it rises so abruptly, that there is almost a single perpendicular wall from the foot to the summit. This also explains the seventeenth verse, 'and the people stood at the nether part of the mount.' It is seldom that one can stand so near the foot of a mountain, and cast the eye up so many thousand feet of an almost precipitous descent, as in the Sebaije plain at the base of Sinai."

To ascend the mountain directly from the foot would probably be an impossibility. The expression in ver. 12, "Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about," is in literal adherence to the needs of the case, the face being so singularly bold. If Moses took the path leading over the Keeper's Moun-

[1] *Journal of the Roy. Geog. Soc.* vol. xii. p. 75. I have examined the manuscript map of Baron Koller, now in the possession of the Royal Geographical Society, with reference to the point mainly under discussion. It is small, being not over two inches on a side, and contains nothing of importance in addition to those already published. The Wady and Plain of Sebaijeh are not represented at all, the scope of the map not embracing any objects south of Sinai.—ED.

tain, the Shoeib, and up by the cypress trees, he could be followed by no eye looking at him from a distance. The way must always have been a steep and hard one, unless it were the one already alluded to leading up out of the Raha plain, the Derb Serich or Path of Moses, passing near the old Convent el Arbain. But what militates especially against accepting the Sebaijeh plain as the scene of the law-giving, in the judgment of Tischendorf, is "the narrow and perilous way which the Israelites must have had to take as they came up out of the Wadi el Sheikh. And the words, 'And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God,' indicate the existence of a considerable space between the camp and the steep wall of the mountain. For this the Wadi Sebaije, how much soever may be deducted from the assumed numbers of the host of Israel, will not absolutely afford room." But this objection seems to be removed by the explanation offered above, that the Wadi Sebaijeh served as a road through which in only about an hour the people could withdraw from the scene of the law-giving to the part of the camp which might be in the Wadi el Sheikh and in the Raha plain. Tischendorf agrees with Robinson, that the latter was admirably adapted to be the scene of an encampment. "For even here," he says, "the mountain can be 'touched;' here also it may be approached below, and it admits of being compassed by a boundary. Here was ample room for two millions [with their cattle and flocks?], for it is right to take the number strictly; and here could Moses, in fact, 'bring forth the people out of the camp to meet with God.' That Sinai might thus be confounded with Horeb, offers no real difficulty. The name of the two summits of the mountain group is not definite even at the present day."

And yet, although there were no difficulty in this, still, with the acceptance of the northern side of the mountain as the scene of the law-giving, there is its antagonism with the really ancient tradition, and the chapels and buildings on the summit of Sinai, of which the sharp and almost inaccessible peak Ras Sufsafeh bears not a vestige.

The two most recent travellers, my young friends W. Krafft and F. A. Strauss, are to be thanked for a renewed examination of the tract bordering on the southern wall of

Sinai. "In a steep descent of 2000 feet," says the latter,[1] "the mountain plunges down to the gravel hills at its base, meeting there a broad plain which rises like an amphitheatre at the east and south, and affording an excellent camping ground for the children of Israel. From it their eyes rested directly upon Sinai, as upon a huge altar, towering far above them. Here God completed His covenant with His people, who tarried for three days in the neighbouring wadis of Raha, Sheikh, and others adjacent to them. When the morning of the third day had come (Ex. xix. 16), 'there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses led forth the people from the camp to meet with God.' Probably this involved the traversing the Wadi Sebaijeh, whose width was equal to that of the Wadi Sheikh."

On one of the following afternoons the two young friends visited the Sebaijeh valley or wadi, at whose extremity, according to their conviction, the children of Israel were assembled to receive the law. "If we were surprised at the wonderful situation of the mountain in relation to the surrounding country when on the summit, we were even more amazed at the sublimity of this altar of God, rising sublimely above the flow of the Sebaije plain. We had seen no mountain in all the Peninsula which so manifestly corresponds with the language of Scripture."

This excursion of theirs is the first one known to me whose object has been to ascertain the topographical relations of the tract south of Sinai; and the only one, so far as I have been able to learn, which has traversed the whole extent of the Wadi Sebaijeh; for in their course away from the convent they took the path over the Keeper's Mountain, and returned by way of the Wadi Sebaijeh and the Wadi Sheikh. It is to be hoped that other observers will soon thoroughly inspect the whole topography of Sinai, that we may have a more exact map of the locality, which is the more to be desired, inasmuch as both Laborde's and Robinson's are defective in relation to the Wadi Sebaijeh, and Robinson's in relation to the Sebaijeh plain as well.

[1] *Sinai and Golgotha: Reise in das Morgenland*, von Fr. A. Strauss, Berlin 1847, p. 136.

To this I add an extract, made at my request, from the diary of the two travellers just quoted, for which I wish to express my heartiest thanks.

NOTE *on the Sebaijeh Plain at the south foot of Sinai, and the Wadi Sebaijeh as a connecting link between it and the Plain er-Raha and the Wadi el Sheikh at the north. Extracted from the Journal of F. A. Strauss.*

On the afternoon of the 2d of March we left the convent, taking the path of the valley Shuib, for the most part a difficult one, for the purpose of exploring more minutely the plain lying at the southern base of Jebel Musa. Forty minutes brought us to the top of the pass (on the Keeper's Mountain) between ed-Deir and Sinai, and it took the same time to clamber down to the place called "Gravel Hills" on Robinson's map. There lay before us then a large plain, whose extent we had not suspected from the summit of Jebel Musa.

The breadth of this plain at the foot of Jebel Musa, where it joins the Wadi Sebaijeh, is 1400 feet: towards the south it increases very gradually. At the place where it first begins to bow in towards the west, it is 1810 feet wide. The mountains around it rise a very gentle slope, and attain no remarkable height, so that they could be used as the encampment of a great multitude of people; and the view down into the plain would be like that from the seats of an amphitheatre. One of these minor eminences was said to bear the name of Jebel Baalti.

The distance from the point south of Jebel Musa, where the plain begins to curve towards the west to the opening of the Wadi Sebaijeh, is 12,000 feet (the breadth of er-Raha according to Robinson; who also gives the distance north to south on er-Raha 2700 feet, from east to west 7000. The area found by multiplying together the two last data would only be about half of the whole Raha plain, in consequence of the large bow at the south-west, and the opening into the Wadi el-Sheikh at the east). From this point the plain makes a broad western curve, as just indicated; and, measuring with the eye, the distance from the point where that bend begins to its western extremity is just as great as that to the opening of the Wadi Sebaijeh. At the divergence of these two lines

Jebel Musa towers up in grand pre-eminence over, and in striking contrast with, the low rolling hills at its base. From its foot the observer can look far up the Wadi Sebaijeh, which has a breadth of five hundred feet, notwithstanding the fact that it is a little narrowed by the hills which flank it.

Taking our way up the Wadi Sebaijeh, it was ten minutes before we lost sight of Jebel Musa. At its bending towards the north-west the wadi widens sensibly (not indicated on any maps), and its width at the narrowest places is more than six hundred feet. At the repeated bends of the wadi there are hollow basins, each one of which would harbour a multitude of people. The merging of the Wadi Sebaijeh in the Wadi el Sheikh was so little marked, that in the darkness which had fallen we did not detect it. But when we had occasion to leave the convent in the further pursuit of our journey, we got the impression, on coming to the place where the two wadis have their confluence, that they form one vast valley, of which the er-Raha plain is only an arm; and that the Wadi Sebaijeh ought to be represented as of the same breadth which Robinson assigns in his map to the Wadi el Sheikh.

The reasons why the Sebaijeh plain seems to me to be preferable to er-Raha as the scene of Israel's great encampment are two. The first is, that the hills and mountains which encompass the latter are so steep that they could not be used at all: the declivities around the Sebaijeh, on the contrary, are so gentle, and so much resemble an amphitheatre, that they would be very available as a camping ground, and could accommodate a vast number of people, even if the plain were not as large as er-Raha. The second reason is, that at er-Raha the plain falls away at the north, and the view of Ras Sufsafeh is soon lost; but the Sebaijeh plain constantly rises as it leaves the foot of Jebel Musa, and the latter towers more and more majestically as the beholder recedes from it.

As we paced the distances on the Sebaijeh plain (an Englishman and myself), I have given the lowest estimate rather than the highest; and I have no doubt that more accurate measurement will show that the Sebaijeh plain is yet larger than I have exhibited it. But this I can say with certainty, that in respect to magnitude and the general grandeur of effect which results from height, there is no comparison between Sinai with

its plain on the south side, and Horeb with its plain on the north.[1]

DISCURSION III.

THE CONVENT OF ST CATHERINE AT SINAI, WITH ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD, ITS GARDENS, ITS EARLIER BUILDINGS, AS WELL AS ITS PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MONKS AND SERVITORS.

Having considered the physical structure of the central Sinai group in its connection with historical transactions, and with the traditions which have ascribed to it the scenes of the giving of the Mosaic law, we might now advance to the second or more northern group of Serbal and the Wadi Feiran, for which there are also the same historical claims, but in this case in opposition to the voice of tradition and the legends. Before coming to the discussion of that subject, however, we cannot wholly leave out of our sight the central spot of all the legends, the convent and the convent life; for during more than 1500 years that spot has been the rock to which all Beduin life and all pilgrim life has had some attachment, more or less close, and which therefore, from an ethnographical point of view, cannot wholly be passed by. I do not propose by any means to give a detailed history of this foundation: that task must be taken up by others; and towards its fulfilment, Pococke, Burckhardt, Robinson, De Laborde, and others, have made valuable contributions. We can only indicate these sources in this general way, and also refer to the countless pilgrimages, whose results may contribute more or less to such a work. In addition to what has already been said in this work regarding this foundation in the Byzantine time, and the Mohammedan epoch which followed, there remains very little to be said.

The so-called Valley of the Convent, or the Hospice, at the northern outlet of the Wadi es Shoeib, leaves the Raha plain, and gradually widens as it runs southward between the walls of Horeb and of Epistemi or ed-Deir, both about 2000 feet high, till reaching the convent, a half-hour's distance from the

[1] I notice that in the last edition of Strauss' *Sinai and Golgotha*, 1865, as well as in the earlier ones, there is no disposition to concede the point in discussion, notwithstanding what Stanley and others have written.—ED.

opening, it almost immediately contracts, leaving no further passage than a narrow cleft, which serves as a footpath, and which runs over the Keeper's Mountain to the Wadi Sebaijeh: this preserves it from being a perfect *cul-de-sac*, like the Ledja on the western side of Horeb. A death-like stillness reigns over all the wilderness, which is covered with ragged masses of granite, the huge blocks coming up even to the very walls of the convent.

North-west of the Valley of the Convent, and a half-hour's walk from the buildings, lies the often mentioned Raha plain, large in size, and surrounded by steep mountains. It is by no means perfectly level, but arches in the middle, sloping northward as well as southward, and therefore having a real, though low, water-shed. Robinson found the breadth of the plain to be, at the place where he measured, 2700 feet; the distance to the base of Horeb measured in like manner was 7000 feet. Robinson estimated the superficial surface of the plain to contain at least one square mile. This space is nearly doubled by the recess so often mentioned on the west [the opening of the Ledja], and by the broad and level area of Wadi esh Sheikh on the east, which issues at right angles to the plain, and is equally in view of the front and summit of the present Horeb. These careful measurements were valuable in giving the two Americans the means of comparing the biblical account with these data, and of ascertaining that there was space enough to serve as the encampment of all Israel,—a conclusion not invalidated by the adoption of the belief that they were led by Moses through the short Wadi Sebaijeh round to the south side of Sinai, in accordance with Ex. xix. 17: "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God."

The names of all the adjacent mountains, and other natural features, are all given on Robinson's special map of Sinai; but from the plain only the summit of St Catherine is visible, that of Sinai being completely hidden, as well as the broad back of Horeb. Only the northern peak, the Ras el Sufsafeh, is to be seen. Horeb, according to Robinson, is the Christian name of the whole northern bulk of the mountain, although the Beduins do not know this name. Seetzen, however, heard the monks call it Chorif, a possible corruption of Horeb. The name Serich heard by Pococke, and Shereyk by Lord Lindsay,

probably have a local connection with only the northern or Horeb portion of the mountain. The Beduins give the name Jebel Musa, or Mount of Moses, to the entire eminence, sometimes, however, designating it as the Jebel et Tur, *i.e.* lofty mountain, and very seldom with the additional appellative of Sina. Most travellers use all these names indiscriminately.

At the confluence of the Ledja valley with er-Raha there lie on both sides small garden patches, studded with different kinds of fruit-trees. The one on the east is watered by the spring which gushed from the earth near the ruined Convent of el-Arbain. Burckhardt found apricots and roses in full bloom there, and discovered also the ruins of a little ancient convent called el-Bostan, doubtless the source whence arose the name Bostan vale, used by Schubert and many other travellers. According to Burckhardt, it lies forty minutes' walk below the Convent of el-Arbain, and at the time of his visit a number of Jebalije, or Arab serfs, were living there. Robinson could discover no traces of it. Burckhardt gives the distance from this point to the northern base of Horeb as a half-hour's walk. On the way there is to be seen the place which the legend asserts to have once witnessed the casting of the golden calf; there are also other equally wonderful spectacles which pilgrims devoutly visit—the Seat of Moses, the Kettle of Moses (in which Beduin treasures are placed), and others. Half-way up the Ledja—that is, twenty minutes' walk below el-Arbain—they show an isolated block of granite, which, according to the legend, points out the true base of Horeb, and which Moses struck to bring out water—the Massah and Meribah of Ex. xvii. 5–7. It is evidently a less block which has fallen from above, and but one of many which fill the Ledja vale. In 1814 W. Turner witnessed the fall of many similar fragments. Russegger says that it is a piece of red granite of about 3000 cubic feet, and seamed with a vein of feldspar about a foot in thickness, which has been notched out by the hand of man, leaving a number of cross cracks. That this is the best watered part of the whole valley, will be understood from the fact that the waters of the snow-crowned St Catherine come directly to it, and manifest their effects also at the gardens of el-Arbain above, and of the Bostan vale below. The twelve holes, called the "twelve tribes," which are exhibited to the pilgrims, and which

are hollowed out of the stone, may be natural, or they may be artificial—Robinson and Burckhardt differ as to it—but they are in any case much more trifling indications of the preserving power and the bountiful mercy of Jehovah towards his people, than the grand testimony which He has given all over the world, in the myriad springs which He has opened, yielding their living water from day to day to supply the wants of all His creatures.

The Ledja valley is always supplied with water, Burckhardt informs us; and the Israelites could not have suffered with thirst there, if the high peak in the background was at that time yielding its stores of snow to supply the springs at the base. But the Beduins, following the foolish stories of the monks, bring their camels to this place as to a sacred spot; and here they kneel and pray that the beasts may be fruitful: they thrust many a handful of the shrubs growing around into the holes in the ground, under the superstitious belief that such a procedure is of sovereign efficacy in removing the diseases of camels when they are sick. Burckhardt perceived in the valley lower down than the great block commemorating Massah and Meribah (which has caused pilgrims for many ages to wonder, they having looked at its own massiveness instead of the majestic size of the great mountain of which it is a tiny fragment), in eight different places, illegible inscriptions of which he took copies, and which he ascribed to Egyptian pilgrims, whose desire to see the spot where so great a miracle was wrought brought them thus far, but no farther. But Robinson's discovery of similar inscriptions above el-Arbain disproved such a hypothesis. The inscriptions, too, scattered everywhere in that district, show that there is no foundation for Burckhardt's presumption.

The Convent of the Forty Martyrs, or el-Arbain, whose position I have already spoken of, bore for a long time the name of the Bostan Convent; but all full accounts of it have passed away, and no recent traveller has thoroughly explored its ruins. Yet we learn from Morison's account, written on his visit in 1697, that it had been deserted by nine monks, who but a short time before had lived there; and that the whole Ledja, which had once been a favourite resort for strangers, had in the same manner been utterly forsaken. Ruppell, who was there in 1831, ascertained by barometrical measurements that the floor

of the convent chapel is 5366 Paris feet above the level of the sea; about 500 feet higher, therefore, than the Shoeib valley on the east side of the mountain. Russegger and Schubert have given different results; but they both confirm the superior altitude of the Ledja.

That at Della Valle's and Thevenot's time (the seventeenth century) this convent was inhabited by monks, admits of no doubt, and is proved by their own accounts: the rudeness offered later by Beduins caused it to be either entirely deserted, or to be only temporarily occupied by the monks and their Jebalije or Arab serfs, on whom the care of the garden devolved. It was very seldom used as a permanent halting-place for strangers, who now, however, usually begin their pilgrimage to St Catherine at this point, or at least, on their descent from Sinai and Horeb, use el-Arbain as a place to rest or to lodge at. Seetzen tells us that he did not see a single monk there on his visit. He says that the rocks around are sharply pointed, and are composed of hornstone porphyry, hornstone, and black jasper; and that between the large detached masses he saw much white quartz. The neglected garden, which a single Arab was caring for, meeting him as it did in such a barren and fearful wilderness, was a most grateful surprise. In its upper part he found a place hollowed out like a basin, and containing water: he also found a number of olive trees, fig, pear, apple, and apricot trees; the birgul, a kind of yellow plum; the shelluk, a kind of prune; quinces, cornels, lemons, oranges, grape-vines, and pomegranates. The poplar and the aspen flourish there also, but not the palm: there were a few, but they were mere bushes.

Burckhardt, who took the same way that Seetzen followed, from the Chapel of Elijah down into the valley, but who was there just a month later, speaks of this fruitful garden of olives, and of the fragrance of the orange trees, which were then in bloom. Unfortunately these trees had for five years before been greatly devastated by locusts, which even come to these wild solitudes. These little creatures are more obnoxious to the Beduins of Sinai than to their Arabian brethren: the Sinai Arabs do not eat them, but the latter esteem them a delicacy.

Ruppell, who coincides with Seetzen in his account of the fruit-trees, and who made some stay at the ruined Convent of

el-Arbain, praises the quality of the fruit produced there as very fine, and ascribes as the reason the protection which the seclusion of the place affords against the cold of winter, and the bountiful supply of water in the summer, when the basin referred to above is full, and yields through little conduits traced in the ground an abundant supply for each tree. The Arabs take much pleasure in looking at this artificial method of irrigation, but they take no hint from it to collect a like store, wherever they may be, for their own uses. Schimper tells us that the olives and the almonds which grow in this garden are particularly nice, although the trees are scrubby, and have the rough look of wild fruit-trees. The Jebalije, or Arab serfs, have a strong attraction to the locality; and when they are sick they go to the old ruined chapel to sleep there, thinking that it will have some efficacy in healing them.

Robinson discovered a small poplar grove, which afforded the timber which the monks needed for building purposes. The climate of the place is so charming and healthy, that both he and Burckhardt thought that it would be a most suitable place for people in Cairo to withdraw to during the unhealthy months; yet the insecurity of the spot has prevented its use for this purpose. At the time of Ruppell's visit only one Jebalije was there; his work was to water the garden, and to replenish the burning lamp of the chapel. The building encloses a square court, surrounded by a high wall, and contains, besides the church, some vaulted cells and storehouses. All the windows look inwards, towards the court: there is but one entrance, and that is protected by strong bars cased with sheet iron. On the holy days of the Greek Church, mass is read within the chapel, to empty benches. Forty years ago, according to Ruppell, a number of monks lived there; but more recently the sources of income have diminished, and the mission here, as well as at many other places in the Peninsula, has been abandoned.

Von Schubert has added yet other data regarding these localities, explored by him early in March 1837. At the northern extremity of the Ledja, the superior of the Convent of St Catherine showed the stone near which Moses stood when he came down from the mountain, and, filled with anger at the conduct of the people (Ex. xxxv.), broke the tables of the law. It is the Hadj Musa of the Arabs; and Lord Lindsay saw one

kneeling by the rock and praying, meanwhile stroking it with his hand. Farther on the stone was shown to von Schubert, in a hollow of which the golden calf was melted; and the site of the place, according to the legend, where "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play;" the scene, moreover, of the fearful punishment which fell upon them (Ex. xxxii. 15–34). It seems to be possible that this was a place set apart, even before the exodus, to the worship of Moloch or Typhon; and that we have an allusion to it in Ex. v. 1, 9, 10, in the request which Moses and Aaron preferred to Pharaoh, that they might have permission to go into the wilderness on a three days' journey, to offer sacrifice. In the same neighbourhood Aaron's Mountain was shown, on which the high priest and the seventy elders tarried while Moses and Joshua ascended the mount of God. Schubert then reached the Garden Bostan (he speaks of no convent there), whose blossoming trees formed a wall, under the shelter of which lived a Jebalije Arab, whose duty was to take care of the trees, and whose reward was one-half of the fruit. Near this place, and at the opening of the Ledja, von Schubert breakfasted; and from the stone on which he sat the view westward fell upon a lovely valley, leading towards Mount St Catherine, and which, passing through very steep and inaccessible cliffs (perhaps over the Jebel el Ghubsheh), leads to the Wadi Hebran. At the angle which this valley or mountain gorge makes with the Ledja, there is, according to Schubert, a second garden, in which stand both fruit and cypress trees. No other traveller alludes to it expressly. Seetzen alludes to still another garden called el-Tella, whose situation is, however, quite unknown. From this point the path winds up the Ledja by the side of the channel formed by the wintry floods.

We now turn to the great Convent of St Catherine in the Shoeib valley, and enter its hospice, which for so many centuries has received as guests the pilgrims of all Christendom; situated at the very heart of the wilderness, surrounded by hordes of hostile Mohammedan Arabs, and protected by the strong walls built by Justinian fifteen hundred years ago.

It is perfectly intelligible that, after many trials, after much fatigue, anxiety, and want, and perhaps suffering, the pilgrim to these hallowed places welcomes with peculiar satisfaction

the sheltered place, and looks upon it as the abode of perpetual contentment and peace; that his imagination transfigures the scene, and, as he remembers the great event which this locality once witnessed, that he gives himself up to that deep and quickened glow of feeling which is almost inevitable under these new conditions of his life. The countless records which travellers give us have fully detailed these experiences; but they will be of but little service to us. My object is rather to elicit those facts which show the general topography of the place, and the relation of the convent to it; and my authorities must be therefore the reports of the most eminently trustworthy and acute observers, either given independently or in confirmation of each other's results.

Niebuhr was refused admission within the walls of the convent, because he brought no letter from the bishop, who resided at that time in Cairo; yet the monks sent food to him in his tent. It was necessary at that time to take such precautions, in consequence of the repeated efforts of the Beduins to possess themselves of the inner convent; and no one could be admitted unless he brought with him testimony that he was a Christian.

Seetzen, too, had no order from the bishop; nor had he a letter from the Greek bishop of Jerusalem, whence he came; but the two passes from the dreaded pashas of Damascus and Acre stood him in good stead, and procured his admission, while his guide was excluded and obliged to find a shelter among the Beduins. This was in 1807.

The garden, at whose southern end rises the convent, made doubly picturesque by the beautiful foreground, gradually opens between the dark cypress pyramids, the bright green rows of poplars, the umbrageous walnut trees, and a wide orchard of apple and pear trees, all overgrown with vines, and offering the most delightful welcome to one who longs for a bit of green, after enduring the frightful desolation of the desert. The garden fills the entire breadth of the ravine, and is also conducted by means of terraces partly up the side of the mountain. It, as well as the convent, is surrounded by a high wall, with here and there still loftier towers. There is no opening at the ground; and the only door is an aperture in the wall, at the height of about thirty feet, to which, by means

of ropes, men, cattle, provisions, the luggage of travellers, everything which is allowed to enter the convent, are lifted. The doors which once entered the building directly are now closed, in order to guard against Beduin attacks; but as the ancient etiquette was that every newly appointed bishop should enter at the great gate, the Arabs, who had the right of escortage to the convent, embraced the opportunity to press in and do much mischief. To avoid this, and yet not break through an old custom, the Bishop of Sinai never comes to the convent, but always resides at Cairo. The gates of the towers have been closed since the seventeenth century; but quite recently, and since the monks have been on the present peaceable terms with the Beduins, permission has been granted to the chiefs to enter the garden, and even the convent itself.

So narrow is the ravine in which the convent lies, that, according to Burckhardt, its rear wall rests directly on the lower terrace of Horeb, and is not more than twenty paces from the side of the mountain. In case of an attack with better guns than the Arabs use, the position would be easily commanded from both sides.

The length of each side was estimated by Robinson to be from two hundred to two hundred and forty-five feet; and the walls are built of pieces of rough granite, each about a foot and a half in thickness. One side had formerly fallen in, but it was restored by General Kleber at the time of the French occupation of Egypt. The side facing the east is in a rather dilapidated condition now. The wall towards Horeb is higher than that next to the wadi; and the little cannon which are mounted on the walls give the place a certain air of security.

The interior of the building is divided among a number, about eight or ten, of small courts connected by stairs and arched ways, which communicate also with the adjacent garden by means of subterranean passages, the whole forming a labyrinth so intricate as to be hopelessly perplexing to the stranger. Most irregular is the whole, being a patchwork many centuries in making; the places which have fallen into ruin having been restored not according to the original design, but according to the fancy of the artisan in charge. Yet the appearance of the whole is prepossessing, the neatness noticeable, and the inner courts are adorned with little garden beds,

and with cypresses and grape vines. These spacious courts, whose pavement is trod only by swarthy, bearded, and solitary figures, are surrounded by unsymmetrical buildings, to which important additions have been made even within our own times for the better accommodation of strangers. There is a church with twenty-seven chapels, according to Burckhardt; there is even a small Mohammedan mosque; there are nearly a hundred apartments for guests, small but neat; there are cells for the monks, galleries, cellars, and subterranean passages. There are workshops for all kinds of artisans; there is a large bakery, a flour-mill turned by donkeys; in a word, there are all the appliances of a large establishment, and the various occupations growing out of this are discharged either by the monks or by the Arab serfs.

Two deep and excellent wells supply the convent with water; the so-called Well of Moses, near the church, and another which an English nobleman is said to have dug in 1760, and which is said to be very deep, and to yield the best water. Wooden galleries run around the inner court along the several storeys of the building, and into these the little cells of the monks open. On all the walls and pillars there are verses of holy writ, but mostly in an illegible and abbreviated Greek character. The strangers' apartments are furnished with divans, carpets, pictures, and other adornments and conveniences. There is no tower, and the only bell in the building is rung merely on Sundays; the call to morning prayers is made by hammering a granite block, and to vespers by tapping a piece of wood. The massive church is worth observing for its beauty and its antiquity, as well as for the valuable mosaics which it contains. The choir alone dates back to the time of Justinian; all the rest is of more recent construction. It is built in the old Basilica form, with three naves, and with six pillars and seven arches on a side. The choir is circular at the end, where once stood the representation of the burning bush, and in the court directly in the rear another bush is represented as springing from the same roots. This has always been regarded as a place of great sanctity. The two rows of granite pillars, with their diversified capitals, sustain, says Burckhardt, an arch, the ground colour of which is blue, and which is sown with stars. The floor is badly inlaid with black and white

pieces of marble, but the interior of the church is on the whole imposing, from its display of ornament. There are many splendid lamps and candlesticks of gold and silver, crucifixes, etc., mostly the gifts of Russians; there are numerous pictures of madonnas, saints, biblical scenes, among which some which were wrought in the middle ages may have value. Count de Laborde has called particular attention to a mosaic in the altar niche, which represents the transfiguration of Christ, with Moses, Elijah, and the three disciples, and at the side medallions of Justinian, the founder of the convent, and Theodora. As this piece seems to be cotemporaneous with the erection of the building, the reason becomes obvious why the foundation was formerly called the Convent of the Transfiguration, the name only yielding when the hallowed relics of St Catherine were received into custody. I am unable to understand on what grounds some recent authors have assigned the name "Church of Mary's Ascension" to the place.

The most sacred spot is the chapel Alyka, *i.e.* of the burning bush, on entering which the shoes must be taken from the feet. The spring near by is said to be the very one to which Moses led Jethro's sheep to drink. Outside of the church, and near a vaulted passage, Lepsius discovered several ancient weapons and inscriptions, which he thinks have come down from the time of the Crusades. He took copies of them. There are several chapels for the various sects which used in former days to establish pilgrimages to Sinai, the Armenian, Syrian, Coptic, Greek, and Latin branches of the church (the Protestants have none); but since the falling into desuetude of the old manner of pilgrimages thither, these chapels have lost their original use, and are now seldom opened. Besides these there is the singular spectacle of a Mohammedan mosque within the walls of this Christian convent, remaining to our day as a proof and token of the former domination of the Turkish power over the whole of this region, and built, according to the monks, in order to propitiate the rage of Sultan Selim, and to prevent his threatened destruction of the convent. Yet Burckhardt found, in the course of his examination of the manuscript chronicles of the foundation, that the mosque must have been older than the monkish tradition allowed, for it was in 1489 that Sultan Selim overran Egypt; while a full hundred years before, as early as

1381, he found traces that Mohammedan worship was conducted in a mosque within the convent walls. Even now Moslem pilgrimages sometimes come to this place; and when any one of eminence is a guest, the call to prayer is given from the minaret. We learn[1] that the same thing took place as early as the time of the Crusades, and that it was regarded by the monks as a crushing but inevitable calamity. In the year 1116, Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, purposed making a pilgrimage to Sinai, but was dissuaded by the representations of the monks that his coming would only awaken the suspicion of the Moslems, and bring the convent under suspicion and into great danger.

The old story, that Mohammed once visited this convent to show his veneration for Moses, would seem to be an idle monkish legend. It is said that he gave a firman to it, granting it unconditional protection and security for ever, but that this document was seized by Sultan Selim and carried to Constantinople as a rare prize, and a mere copy sent back. But Burckhardt thinks the whole story idle and improbable. A copy which has been recently in circulation in Germany, and which alludes specifically to Christian priests and bishops, could never have come from Mohammed's head. Tischendorf, who made a thorough examination of the contents of the library at Sinai, and who conversed freely with Father Cyrillus, the best informed of the monks, treats the tale as foundationless. Yet there is this to be said of it, that even now every Turkish Sultan, on ascending the throne, issues a firman through the hands of the Pasha of Egypt, granting protection to the Convent of Sinai. This has generally been of little account with the wild Beduins; but on the accession of Mohammed Ali it again assumed its old importance.

Besides the security which is thus gained, there are other considerations arising from this close connection with Egypt which are worth regarding, and which exhibit some of the earlier obligations which lay between the Moslems and the Christians, and of which we now know so little. Touching this, is what Lepsius writes[2] in 1845: "The white and brown coats which the monks wear are peculiar to Sinai: they are the

[1] Fr. Wilken, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, Leipzig 1831, Pt. ii. p. 403.

[2] Lepsius, manuscript account. [Eng. trans. in Bohn's Antiq. lib. i. *Letters from Egypt, etc.*; also, another translation by Mackenzie.—ED.]

gift of the Pasha of Egypt. The prophet is said to have worn a similar coat, and hence the veneration in which this blending of colours is held among the Arabs. Mohammed Ali himself rises from his divan in the presence of any one who wears such a coat, and treats him with more respect than if clad in any other garment. In earlier times the monks received the revenues of the Cairo custom-house, and even now all their goods pass free."

The library of the convent is generally closed, and carefully guarded from the approach or use of visitors. The monks themselves speak only Greek, Slavic, and a little Arabic, and have very little regard for literature or literary pursuits. They often plead a pretended order forbidding the opening of the library, the more readily to escape the eagerness of some to inspect the treasures which lie buried there. Burckhardt was, however, granted access, and made good use of his opportunity. Two years before his visit, Mr Bankes, an Englishman, had been admitted, and has estimated the number of works to be about two thousand, nearly three-quarters of which are manuscripts; nine-tenths he thought to be theological, and to be written in Greek. Several of the Greek manuscripts he was permitted to carry with him to England: Hephæstion on Greek Metre, an oration of Isocrates, Letters of Phalaris, the first three books of the Iliad, Tragedies of Æschylus, the Medea of Euripides, the beginning of Hippolytus, etc., whose later fate is not known to me.

Burckhardt estimated the number of printed Greek books to be fifteen hundred. Lepsius set it a hundred higher. Besides these are many Incunabula and Arabic manuscripts, mostly prayer-books, extracts from the Scriptures, liturgies, and lives of the saints. The only one which seemed to Burckhardt especially valuable was a thick folio, the works of Lokmann, edited by Hermes Trismegistus, to whom the Arabs ascribe the authorship of so many books. This volume the superior would not part with, but he presented his guest with a fine Aldine *Odyssey*, and one just as fine of the *Anthology*. In the apartment which was formerly occupied by the archbishop there is said to have been seen by many travellers a beautiful Greek manuscript, written in letters of gold, and illuminated; but Tischendorf was unable in his first visit to obtain any trace of

it, notwithstanding the favour shown him by the librarian of the convent, who permitted him to take many other manuscripts to his own room and copy them there.

Of the original document, given to the superior of the convent at the time of its erection by Justinian, we have now no certain knowledge. Tischendorf thinks that it may be yet in existence, but he could get no trace of it. He found, however, what may be a copy of it—a Greek manuscript,[1] with the heading "Golden Bull given by the celebrated Emperor Justinian to the abbot of the sacred Convent of Sinai," but which certainly is not the original document. The same learned traveller has given us additional information[2] regarding other manuscripts seen by him, and which had been overlooked before.

The great confusion which exists in the library, and the jealous exclusion of strangers who would gladly investigate it closely, prevents our reaching many valuable data regarding the earlier history of the foundation. But it is palpably evident and worthy of consideration, that the convent has for many centuries had to carry on a bitter series of hostilities with opponents of a different faith; and yet despite the assaults which have been made upon it, despite the need to which its inmates have been at times subjected, and the violence which they have had to repel, their patience, their mildness of demeanour, and the wealth at their command, have always sheltered them from violence, and the convent has never passed out of the control of its Christian possessors. In former times, it appears that it was made incumbent on the monks of Sinai, by command of the Egyptian rulers, to provide for the security of caravans of pilgrims passing through their territory, *i.e.* between Suez and Akaba. To accomplish this it became necessary for them to summon to their aid some of the Beduin tribes, especially the Szowabha and the Aleygat, and to give them in consequence free access to the most fruitful spots in

[1] Printed in *Anecdot. sacr. et prof.* 1855 (1861).

[2] For an interesting account of Prof. Tischendorf's discovery of the celebrated Sinaitic MS. of the New Test. and the last half of the Old, see his memoir, read before the Roy. Soc. of Lit., London, Feb. 15, 1865. It was obtained with the greatest difficulty, and on the occasion of his third visit to the convent.—ED.

the neighbourhood of the convent; for the monks insisted that Justinian's gift to them embraced the possession of the entire Peninsula. As the number of the Beduins increased, the number of the monks diminished; for there were once as many as six or seven thousand stationed at the various convents in the vicinity, and at last the list was reduced to the few who inhabit the Convent of St Catherine.

In a document purporting to be a contract or covenant, drawn up A.D. 1397 between the monks and the Arabs, it is stated that at that time there were six convents on the Peninsula in addition to that of St Catherine, besides numerous chapels and hermitages. Those which have come down to the present day, though existing now only as ruins, are, besides St Catherine (the only one in a state of preservation) and el-Arbain, the Convent of Elijah on Horeb, the convent in Wadi Feiran, which was standing as early as the twelfth century, the Convent of Tor in el-Wadi, the Deir Antus at the foot of Om Shomar, visited by Burckhardt, and that in Wadi Barabra, visited by Laborde. Pococke tells us of the following additional ones which were to be traced in the early part of the eighteenth century: that of St Cosmos and Damian in the Wadi Tula, and that of the Apostles in the Melga valley. A nunnery stood upon the summit of Epistemi or ed-Deir. To this list can be added the names of two others, of which Robinson heard in the neighbourhood of Bostan,—that of St Peter and Paul, and that of St Mary; and the list, comprising a full dozen, may be closed with the Bostan Convent, of which Burckhardt speaks. There are also others—the Deir Sigillye, on the south-east side of Serbal, for example—which might be added, but of which we have almost no knowledge. The fourth and fifth centuries after Christ were unquestionably the palmy days of the Peninsula: then were established all or nearly all of those chapels, convents, hermitages, grottos, walls, staircases of rock, and paved roads, which are even now to be everywhere traced in almost every part of the country. Even as late as the middle of the fourteenth century, De Suchem found more than four hundred monks living at Sinai under an archbishop and a number of prelates. The monks claim even now to have a right to all the palm and fruit trees along the Gulf of Akaba, and pretend that their right has been confirmed by the Egyptian

authorities. The original document which puts them in possession they do not exhibit.

Burckhardt tells us that the monks of Sinai, despite their ignorance, are always glad to welcome visitors. This may well have been the case in the troublous times, such as the period of the French possession of Egypt, of Wahabite reforms, and Mehmed Ali's wars in Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, when Seetzen and Burckhardt, rare guests, came to them, and brought them intelligence of what was transpiring in that great world from which they are so completely sundered, and yet whose fortunes and fate may have so immediate and so great effect upon the destinies of the convent at Sinai. At the period of Seetzen's visit, the chief object of interest was the overthrow of the Osmans, for that event would give such a vast impetus to pilgrimages by members of the Greek and Russian Church. At the time of Burckhardt's visit the convent was rarely visited except by occasional Greek pilgrims from Suez and Cairo, but there were regular caravans which came from Jerusalem and Cairo which took their course that way and visited the place. More recently the number of educated and scientific travellers has increased. The short stay which they usually make has prevented them from adding materially to our knowledge; but of those to whom we are indebted for their personal researches are Volney, who was here in 1793, Rozieres and Coutelle in 1800, Seetzen[1] in 1807, W. Turner[2] in 1815, Burckhardt in 1816, L. de Laborde in 1828, E. Ruppell in 1831, Wellsted in 1833, W. Schimper[1] in 1835, Lord Lindsay and Schubert in 1837, Robinson in 1838, Russegger in 1839, Tischendorf in 1844, and Lepsius[1] in 1846.[3]

The only regular guests at the convent are the Beduins, every one of whom, in accordance with an ancient custom, has the right of demanding bread for breakfast and supper. This is passed out to them, as no Arab save those who are held as serfs—the Jebalije—are ever permitted to set foot within the

[1] Seetzen's, Schimper's, and Lepsius' accounts are all in manuscript. [Since Ritter wrote, Lepsius has published his journal, and it has been translated into English.—ED.]

[2] *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, London 1820.

[3] The most recent travellers have added nothing of importance to what was given by those mentioned in the text.—ED.

sacred enclosure. Fortunately there is little or no good pasturage in the neighbourhood, and the camping grounds of the Beduins are for the most part at a considerable distance. Their visits are therefore not so frequent as they would otherwise be. Still there is rarely a day when the monks do not have to fill thirty or forty Arab mouths. They used to be obliged to give other food than bread; but within recent times that obligation has been transferred to the convent at Cairo, which cannot plead poverty, and which is obliged to furnish every Beduin who claims it with a bowl of cooked meat.

This brings us to speak of the peculiar double relation in which the convent stands to the Beduins, who are in part its ghafirs or protectors, and in part its servants or serfs. Yet I cannot altogether avoid alluding to some observations of an English missionary named Wolff,[1] which do not in every respect accord with the accounts which others have given, but which he made after repeated opportunities of conversing with the people living in the convent, his last visit occurring in 1836. He was there in 1821; and after supplying the strangers' rooms with English and French Bibles and prayer-books, he called upon a monk named Gideon whose age was a hundred and five years, sixty of which he had spent within the convent. This old man showed him a History of the Foundation, in which it was stated that the founder, the Emperor Justinian, sent a thousand Christians from Servia (whom the Arabs called Subbian), and besides these, masons from the village Mattarea near Heliopolis, and that these men built the convent in the year 527 (this was the first year of the Emperor Justinian's reign). Wolff tells us further, that many of these Subbian, after falling away from Christianity and becoming Mussulmen, and so continuing for many generations, in 1821 were baptized by Father Kaliston. He also says, that some time since these Subbian (a word used very much in the same way and with the same signification with Jebalije) fell out with the monks; but seeing their camels and their wives dying in numbers, they regarded it as a sign of the wrath of Heaven, and turned back to obedience. These people seem to have thrown off all European usages, and to have completely assimilated themselves

[1] J. Wolff, *Journal Account of his Missionary Labours, Letter* iv., London 1839, p. 310 sq.

to the Arab mode of life. The bareness of the desert compels them to be in a manner dependent on the convent, and to prolong the existence of a tie which might be more easily broken, were it not for the distribution of bread which the monks make to all the servitors who claim it. The Subbian, or rather the Jebalije, of which they form a part, are now the gardeners of the place, and the guards of the olive orchards, and a certain number of them are always to be found within the convent walls. If what Schubert tells us be a fact, that in the last century there were among the Jebalije some families which remained true to the Christian faith, and that in 1750 an old woman, the last Christian of her race, was buried in the convent garden, the charge is laid with good reason on the monks, that they have been recreant to their trust, in allowing Christianity to die out among those over whose spiritual estate they are set.

Schimper has had perhaps the best opportunity to study the habits of this mixed population which bears the general name of Jebalije, and whose duty it is to discharge the menial services laid upon them by the monks. Schimper was not allowed to enter the convent, but was compelled to encamp on the outside, where he was in continual communication with these poor miserable people in the course of his botanical excursions throughout the neighbourhood. He says that, having become apostate to their old faith (alluding to the Subbian referred to above), and not being recognised by the Beduins as indigenous to the land, free-born Arabs, they hold the despised position of a hated third class. Their condition, according to Schimper, is pitiable: they are a hungry, thirsty, naked horde of about a thousand souls; and in the bleak, inclement winters of Sinai, with only a few rags to cover them, he was perfectly able to understand that their lot must be wretched enough. Their expression, that "they did not mind the heat of summer, it was the cold of winter that they feared," was perfectly intelligible to him. Despite the abuse, the foul language, the curses and the arbitrary rule to which they are exposed and constantly subjected, despite the entire neglect of their spiritual condition by the monks, he says that there are some noble fellows among them. The most of them herd in their poor tents around the convent walls, but a few are allowed to live within the building. This is confirmed by Russegger and Seetzen. Ruppell, who

found the convent itself sunk in poverty at the time of his visit (1822), conceived so low an opinion of the Jebalije, as to conclude that, even if they were to be entirely neglected by the monks, and perish, the world would lose very little in them. He describes their main occupation to be the distillation of date brandy for their own use. But it is possible that the unhappy reception which this distinguished traveller had at the convent may have coloured his views of the whole place and its inhabitants; for, coming with his large Arab retinue, he was taken for an enemy come to attack the convent, and was greeted with a volley of stones. It was some time before he could prevail upon the monks to believe that his mission was a purely peaceful one. Henniker[1] shows a more hostile spirit yet, and declares that the convent is a kind of asylum for the rascally priests of the Greek Church, who are sent there for discipline. Father Cyrillus himself is said to have been a kind of priestly outlaw.

Very different from the condition of the Jebalije is that of the Towara Arabs, whom usage and ancient stipulations have constituted the ghafirs or protectors of the convent. I have already alluded to the manner in which the gradual weakening of the monks' power has led to the increased strength of this tribe. At the time of Burckhardt's visit, their sheikhs numbered twenty-four, and their possessions were scattered along from Syria to the Red Sea. Those who live at a distance, however, do not share in the advantages which the true ghafirs enjoy: they only receive a slight yearly subsidy of money or woollen stuffs. The Towara proper, however, live not far from the convent, and scour the whole country to get as much out of travellers as possible. Only the Szowabha and Aleygat tribes are looked upon as the real protectors of the convent: the Mezeny, who have come into the country within a comparatively recent period, have no claim to the title; and even of the great tribe of the Szowabha, only the subdivisions Ulad Said and Oworeme have the actual duty of serving the convent laid upon them: the Koreysh and the Rahamy have not even the right of escorting travellers and transporting their luggage. Every one of the tribe Ulad Said receives yearly a Spanish dollar, and their sheikh holds in a business point of view the first place of any of the Arabs who have dealings with the con-

[1] F. Henniker, *Notes*, p. 228.

vent. Whenever a Towara sheikh reports himself at the walls, he is entitled to receive at the hands of the monks a portion of bread, coffee, sugar, soap, and occasionally a handkerchief and physic.

Of course many difficulties and much bitter feeling arise at times out of this relation; for if the sheikh-protector is not satisfied with the gifts which he receives, he immediately displays his hostility to the monks, lays waste their garden, and makes prisoners of them when they are on their walks outside the walls. Even murder has been committed on them, and huge stones hurled down upon the convent from the high cliffs above. Nothing remains to be done under such circumstances but to conciliate the sheikh. It was for this reason that Volney, who visited most of the convents of the Holy Land, all of which are surrounded by hostile Beduins, called them cages, where the monks live like prisoners, and depend even for their daily bread upon the good-will of the wild hordes that encompass them. He gives the number of the monks at Mount Sinai as fifty. In 1816 these came under the protection of the powerful Pasha of Egypt, Mohammed Ali; but intelligent travellers have supposed that it would be better after all to buy up the favour of the Beduins with ten or twenty Spanish dollars, than that of a Turkish protector with a thousand. The monks try to keep up a great respect for their warlike preparations, in the eyes of the Beduins, by firing off from time to time the insignificant cannon which garnish the walls of the convent; but they are very careful never to slay a Beduin, out of a wholesome fear of the revenge which would be sure to follow; for the offence could only be atoned for with blood. Yet, in spite of all these difficulties, the monks avail themselves largely of the good traits in the Beduin character—trustworthiness, and a willingness to be propitiated by presents; and they rightly regard it as a merciful providence that they are brought into contact with wild Arabs rather than with the utterly false and insatiable Turks of Syria and Egypt, by whom the convent would long ago have been wrested out of Christian possession. Serious difficulties arise but seldom, and there is sometimes a real feeling of amity between the monks and the Beduins; and the sheikhs have sometimes been admitted within the garden walls to make business arrangements with Europeans. The

common Arabs are, however, never permitted to enjoy this privilege, and they must be communicated with by shouting from an aperture in the wall about thirty feet from the ground.

The number of the monks was twenty-three at the time of Burckhardt's visit, twenty at that of Robinson's. Schubert gives the number as twenty-six, but says that some were always away soliciting alms. Among them there are a cook, a distiller, a baker, a shoemaker, a tailor, a carpenter, a smith, a mason, and a gardener. The most of them are old men of from seventy to eighty, according to von Schubert, but in the full possession of all their faculties,—a fact which is accounted for by the salubrity of the climate, as well as by the strict regimen of the place. They bake excellent bread, and distil very good date brandy called racki; their fare consists of soup, vegetables, fruit, leeks, olives, and dried fish; meat is disallowed the whole year. Strangers have set before them rice, a stew of goats' flesh, dried fruit, and racki. Twice in the day-time mass is read, and twice in the night: the discipline of the monks is strict as to food, fasting, and prayer. The most of them are from the Greek islands: they stay usually but half a dozen years each, and then return and glorify themselves for their martyrdom in the wilderness among the Beduins; yet there are some in the convent who have lived there for more than forty years. The sister convent is in Cairo, where Burckhardt found about fifty monks and a superior: that at et-Tor has fallen to ruin.

The monks are under the general control of a prior, whom the Arabs call the Wakyl; but the Ikonomos (*Οἰκονόμος*), whom the Arabs call the Kolob, is the real resident head of the whole establishment, and conducts all its affairs. The order of monks of Mount Sinai, widely scattered through the East, whose convent at Sinai is as sacred to the Greek Church as Jerusalem is to the Romish, is under an archbishop, chosen from the monks of Sinai and Cairo, and confirmed as a matter of form by the Greek Patriarch at Jerusalem. Formerly the archbishop resided at the Convent of St Catherine; but since its income has become much reduced he lives elsewhere, as his entrance into the convent would give occasion to the Beduins to make monstrous exactions. Lord Valentia[1] was assured by the arch-

[1] G. Vic. Valentia, *Travels*, vol. iii. p. 377.

bishop himself, then residing in Cairo, that it would be necessary to grant the Arabs 100,000 piastres, or nearly £850, were he to be escorted to the convent; and Burckhardt heard the sum set much higher—£1500. Besides, they have the right of entering the great gate of the convent with the archbishop. On this account, since Father Cyrillus, who died in 1760, no archbishop has resided at Sinai; and the great gate has not been opened since the early part of the last century.

With the greatly reduced income of the convent, and with the falling off of the number of pilgrims (the formerly numerous Armenians and Copts have now entirely discontinued their visits, and there are hardly sixty visitors in the year where there were thousands once), it follows that the outlays must be proportionately small. Every monk received two coarse woollen garments in a year; and nowhere except in the church and in the archbishop's apartment is there any display of luxury. The prime necessities of life, wheat and pulse, are brought from Egypt; yet there is not absolute regularity in the conveyance of them, and the monks have been known to be with only one month's provisions on hand. Dates, fruit, and vegetables they get from their own gardens. The supplying the hungry Beduins with bread is the greatest draft upon the resources of the monks: four thousand dollars a year, Burckhardt says, will hardly defray the expense of this one item. Yet it must be said in conclusion, that the poverty of the convent is its greatest protection.

A few words must be added relative to the garden, and to the climate of Sinai.

The height of the mountain, as well as its latitude and longitude, used to be among the riddles of geography. The latter has been determined by Ruppell to be 28° 32′ 55″ N. lat. and 31° 37′ 54″ E. long. from Paris. The early scientific travellers, Niebuhr and Seetzen, were not sufficiently provided with instruments to settle such matters; and it was only when Rüppell came on his second visit in 1826, that the first accurate measurements were taken. The service which this distinguished traveller has done is very great. More recently, Russegger, Erdl, and Steinheil have repeated similar investigations, but with slightly different results.

The absolute height of el-Arbain Ruppell ascertained to be 5366 feet (in all the following measurements the Paris foot is

meant), but Russegger set it a little higher—5464 feet. The former made the elevation of Sinai to be 7035 feet, the latter 7097, a difference of only sixty-two feet. Steinheil and Erdl's barometrical measurement of the height of the Convent of St Catherine is 4725 feet above the sea: they found the peak of Sinai to be 1071 feet higher, that is, 6796 feet. Russegger gives the elevation of the convent 5115 feet, that of Sinai 1982 feet higher, that is, 7097 feet. According to his measurements, the convent lies 349 feet lower than the ruins of el-Arbain, and must enjoy a rather warmer climate than that in the Ledja; but this is an unsettled question. It is possible that there is not so much difference as 349 feet between the height of the one and that of the other: at all events, it cannot be far out of the way to assign an elevation of about 5000 feet to the height of the convent garden above the sea: but we are not able at present to speak exactly on the subject. The establishment of a meteorological station on Mount Sinai would be of great service, not only for the determination of points of local interest, but also of general geographical importance.

The garden, and the kinds of fruit which it produces, will perhaps give us some insight into the climate of Sinai. The whole winter long, beginning with November, the mountain is covered with snow; all the passes are closed, and the summit unapproachable. Browne found snow as late as the 23d of March. In the garden, however, it does not remain long, being speedily melted by the sun; and stoves are not used in the convent. The true simoom is not directly felt in these high mountain passes, although its influence is doubtless perceptible. So different is the climate from that of Egypt, that although it is a degree farther south than Cairo, fruit ripens two months later. Apricots, which come to maturity on the Nile in April, at Sinai ripen only in June. The trees of the convent garden yield oranges, lemons, almonds, mulberries, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, and olives,—the last named of a superior flavour. There are also, according to Schimper, pomegranates, figs, damsons, and grapes. These all thrive, and yield well. Though ice is found in the gorge as late as February, yet the cold is not of a harsh and biting nature, nor is it of long continuance at a time. Some travellers have laid much stress on the excellent care which is taken of the garden;

but I am inclined to attribute much of the thrift to the admirable protection afforded by the steep and high mountain walls which hedge it in, giving it a climate which is not unlike that of a greenhouse. It is possible, however, that the measurements of Kämptz[1] may yet be proved to be correct, which assign a much lower absolute height to the base of Sinai than Ruppell and Russegger have assigned. His corrections of Ehrenberg grant but 3400 feet as the height of the convent above the sea.

Besides the fruits mentioned above, the garden produces some vegetables, and would more, were it watered as well as the garden of el-Arbain. There are beans, lettuce, onions, cucumbers, melons, and a few ornamental shrubs, among which the cypress is the most conspicuous. Not many of the monks visit the garden excepting those whose duty it is to till it. The drought is often very trying to it; and some years, when there is the promise of a plentiful harvest, the Beduins ravage it, carrying off all the produce, and compel the monks to buy it back from them.

Von Schubert, in his Travels, has given a more minute account of the flora of the Convent Valley and its vicinity, to which the reader is referred.[2]

As to the temperature, Browne found almonds in bloom on the 24th of March. Robinson, who was there also at the close of March, found the country suffering severely with drought, but was delighted at the rich green of the garden, and the softness and purity of the climate. It was already warm, and in the valleys hot at mid-day, but in the morning and evening it was delightful. Schimper was there in the summer, in July and August; in the convent garden, where he pitched his tent, the heat was seldom 31° R., and never reached 33°, though in the most retired clefts it was extremely hot. Yet he felt at once, and recognised, the influence of that high plateau, 5000 feet above the sea. The simoom, as has been remarked, is not felt there, although it has doubtless an indirect influence. On the great plain el-Kaa it is powerful; and in the vicinity of Suez it is so scorching, and carries with

[1] L. F. Kämptz, in *Hall. Allgem. Lit. Zeit.* 1830, Aug. No. 146, p. 524.

[2] V. Schubert, *Reise*, ii. pp. 307, 351 [passage quoted in Ritter's *Erdkunde*, xiv. p. 631].

it sometimes such a weight of dust, that travellers have in some cases[1] been unable to use astronomical instruments.

This noted wind, whose influence is so deadly, is preceded by a perfect calm, and by an intense heat, only to be compared, according to Schimper, to that of a furnace. At the distance of one foot to one and a half from the ground, it is impossible to breathe; for it is hotter there than higher up. It almost seems as if the earth itself were exhaling fire. Gradually this lower stratum of hot air rises as high as three or four feet from the ground. Suddenly there rises a gentle wind, but not from any special quarter: it soon strengthens, and bears a kind of impalpable greyish yellow dust, which, sifting down, covers the valleys as if with a thin gauze-like veil. Speedily the summits of the mountains, so lately bathed in pure sunshine, are hid from view. The wind increases to a hurricane; sharply cut grey clouds are then seen covering the mountain-tops. By this time the temperature is the same at all points, and the radiation from the earth ceases; the dust-clouds which fill the valleys or mountain gorges, and the highly electrical state of the atmosphere, show that the simoom is blowing. This was the appearance of this phenomenon as it was observed on the 10th of June 1835 in the Wadi Hebran. As early as half-past seven in the morning the first sense of discomfort was experienced; at nine the heat was intense; at eleven, the greyish yellow veil spoken of above covered all the mountain gorges; at twelve a high east wind rose, which lasted till sunset, and then died away. The whole horizon was strewn with detached grey clouds; and on the next morning there was blue sky again, and a fresh invigorating atmosphere. When this wind springs up at some distance, and approaches, instead of being generated by the intense heat of the place where the observer stands, there is seen on the western horizon a grey strip of cloud, which increases in size, and whose increase is followed by the strengthening of the wind. When the horizon is completely covered, the wind is high, hot, and relaxing to the system. This is the simoom, against which the traveller finds it some protection to lie down with his face to the ground. It is only this form which is ever felt at Sinai, though in the lowest wadis in the neighbourhood both kinds are experienced. More fearful than

[1] E. Ruppell, *Lettre* in *Corresp. Astr.* 1822, vol. i. p. 579.

the simoom is the chamsin, frequent in the desert of Egypt, which Tischendorf encountered, and which makes a journey perilous during the months of May and June, when it prevails. Schimper, who was at Sinai from June to September, says that June was very hot there, but agreeable; July and August were much hotter. Towards the last of August the Jebalije are much subject to intermittent fevers, which are ascribed to exhalations from the waters standing a long time in their basins; for it is mainly those who work in the gardens who suffer most. In November the basins are supplied with fresh water, and the fevers cease. In addition to intermittent fevers, sun-stroke and cholera are experienced, and severe cases of diarrhœa and colic are very common; they seldom prove fatal, however. The plague is unknown at Sinai. In the low-lying district of et-Tor, intermittent fevers begin as early as April, and last until October and November: they return every year to those who have once been attacked; but those who live in the region seldom die, while they are often fatal to strangers.

I have already alluded to the sounds, like cannonades or peals of thunder, which the monks have often spoken of to visitors; they were the cause of Burckhardt's ascent of the mountain. He ascribed them before he went to volcanic action, but he found nothing at the mountain to justify his hypothesis. Von Schubert, at a later day, heard allusions made to great falls of rocks, which perhaps might have been observed from the summits of the mountains, but which were invisible at the convent. Turner's[1] account of a great fall of rocks in the Ledja is the only one which we possess from the hand of an eye-witness. Nor have we any account (that of Morison[2] excepted) from any traveller of those fearful thunder-storms at Sinai which sweep down upon the mountains during the autumn months, and which do not display their power and their fury in the spring-time, the season when most visits to the region are made. But if the noise caused by the echoing through these gorges of a mere pistol-shot is as grand as Lord Lindsay has represented it, how solemnly sublime would have been the peals and the crash of thunder to a people like Israel, who on the plains of Egypt had never known such a

[1] W. Turner, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant*, Lond. 1820.

[2] Morison, *Rel. hist. l.c.* p. 104.

fearful spectacle! They were never made to know, in the time of the visitation by plagues, how powerful a weapon in the hand of God is the lightning-bolt. Hail and rain had been experienced during those plagues, but the roar of thunder had not been heard. But thunder and lightning accompanied the awful giving of the law upon Sinai; and Jehovah impressed that whole trembling people with a sense of His majesty, by approaching them wrapped in the fearfully splendid garments of the lightning's flame. The glory of God the Creator has manifested itself in many and very different ways. At one time He had bidden the waters mount to just that height, and cover the face of the world to just that depth, which seemed fitting in His sight; and then His word has gone forth, and there has been an end. At another time He had whispered to Elijah in the still small voice; and anon the same word which on Horeb sank into that thrilling whisper, rose into the sublime peal and crash, in which God gave to His people His Will as their Law. Whenever the sunlight streams down upon the earth and glorifies it with splendour, every sensitive and feeling soul declares that it feels in this the nearness, the very presence, of God. Nor is it deceived in it; for the world is not a mere watch, which the Creator once wound up and then dropped from His hand, satisfied that it would go on of itself without the recognition of a sustaining power. There are miracles transpiring around us every day and everywhere; and the most refined speculation and the most exact analysis cannot penetrate so far into the organization of anything, into the physical forces of nature, into things imponderable, as to understand more about the origin of all things than simply this, that God *does* as He *will*. And in the history of that strange Hebrew people, He put forth His power just as He may and does even now, and as men who are learned in many things might see Him do, had they the gift of spiritual discernment. The lightning may kill, or under the direction of God it may even make alive again, and plant its own fiery nature in the breast of man. It may do more. Made to be the mantle in which the glory of God abides, it may become the memorial of His dealings with man, whose lustre shall be imperishable. And so it was on Sinai. The mighty God, who made heaven and earth, and who sustains as well as creates—He was present in the thunders

of that mount, not to defeat and contradict the course of nature, but to exalt and glorify it; to place wonder by the side of wonder, and to fill men with that sense of His almighty power, which we should all feel if we could view the present as we view the past, if we could even now see the hand of God in all His works. And that there was a fearful storm at the time of God's appearance to Israel, is manifest most clearly, most convincingly, in every verse of the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. The writer of that account did not think that he was enfeebling it by coupling with the appearance of God the terrors of thunder and lightning. He felt that it only united so great an event with the highest elements of sublimity which the earth contains. That scene was to be so grand in all its setting, as not to be understood by a single spectator as merely subservient to a temporary purpose; it was intended to be so sublime as to be visible to all men age after age, century after century, and for thousands upon thousands of years. In all the elements which make a scene imposing, that was the grandest which ever transpired upon the earth; and well was it said that no man should touch the mountain and live: well might it be, that for those days the mountain over which Jehovah was to hover, and where He was to communicate His will to man, should be a hallowed place. We all are familiar with the account. We all remember that when the morning of the third day had come, a thick cloud fell upon the mount, the lightnings flashed, and the thunder pealed; the sound of a trumpet rang clear and yet clearer, loud and yet louder, along those winding gorges, and over those broad plains. The great leader brought the people forth from their camp, and placed them where they might behold the majestic scene; and well might the rude Israelites shrink back from the quaking and smoking mountain. Still louder rose the voice of the trumpet, and the Lord called out of the mountain, and Moses went up and received the commands of the Most High.

Nor less amazing, less miraculous, was the result of this stupendous revelation—a covenant of God with His people—which gave them liberty in place of slavery, and took them from the low estate in which they had so long been placed, and set them in a place of the highest favour; breaking the yoke with the one hand, and loading them with favours

with the other. Now they knew that they had to do with not merely that fearful God whom other nations believed in and worshipped, but a tender, gracious, and compassionate God. A horde of people was transformed in a day into a nation; and to them was given not only the sublime conception of the lenity of God, but even then, and in the wonders of Sinai, there was displayed the rudiments of the great revelation of God as a Saviour. And thus all that came afterwards, even that which came in the fulness of time, may be referred back to the day when God appeared amid clouds, and lightning, and thunder, and the trumpet's tone. Even what was most terrible veiled what was most precious, and the aspect of the day gave no warning of the gentleness of which it was the precursor.

A distinguished writer of our times has said that, before the law was given on Sinai, the children of Israel were not a people; nor did they have a God, in any such sense as they did after that day was past. It was then that they first came to a real knowledge of God — that the names Elohim and Shaddai first gained their significance; and *Jehovah* itself dates back to Sinai, and its thunders, for that new impress which was thenceforward to give it its unspeakable sanctity.

CHAPTER VI.

Sec. 10. THE SECOND GREAT GROUP OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN REGION.

SERBAL—THE WADI FEIRAN (FARAN OR PHARAN)—THE WADI MOKATTEB, AND THE DISTRICTS ADJACENT.

THERE are three direct ways of passing from the Sinai to the Serbal group. One is through the very moderately elevated country west of the Wadi Hebran and through the plain el-Kaa; another is by the Wadi Melâha, leading directly across from the upper part of the Wadi Hebran; and still another is by the broad curve of the Wadi el Sheikh, which circles round from the northern base of Sinai, till it comes to el-Bueb (the gate), a narrow pass which connects with the eastern side of the Wadi Feiran. The direct point of connection between the two mountain groups or systems may be said to be that Nakb Haui, or Pass of the Winds, alluded to in another place, where the ascent is difficult indeed, compared with the more circuitous routes on the east and on the west, but which travellers generally select in consequence of its directness. The Wadi Hebran as well as the plain el-Kaa, and the Wadi Feiran, lie wholly external to the high central mountain group, and the passes which have been spoken of penetrate and break up its extreme north-western prolongation; but the mighty volcanic forces which once worked on so grand a scale through all this region, did not confine themselves to the region which we discussed in the last chapter, but exerted so powerful an effect towards the north-west, as to upheave another tract to the height of 6000 feet, that is, to the base of the central Sinai district, and to give to Serbal, in compensation for the lack of the altitude which the mountains of the other groups enjoy, a surpassing wildness of aspect, and a richly pinnacled summit,

which we seek for in vain among the other mountains of the Peninsula. Yet, despite the majesty of its form, and the paradisaical beauty of Wadi Feiran at its base, despite its grand isolation, with no heights comparable to it on the east, north, and west, till within a very recent time it has remained unnoticed and unnamed, visited by no European traveller, and invested with no charm of interest. No religious traditions have pointed it out as the scene of great events, and consecrated it in the eyes of men. It was first studied by naturalists, not by theologians; but archæological science has found in it a richer prize than was anticipated; and we now know, that in pre-Mosaic times, as well as later, Serbal has been invested with a reverence which had not been suspected. The mountain and the beautiful vale at its base have thus won new interest, and it is much to be regretted that we are not as yet in the possession of knowledge sufficient to elucidate all dark points which may arise.

Before Carsten Niebuhr's visit in 1762, I am not aware that any writer has given us the name Serbal. Pococke, who passed in 1738, has indicated the existence of some very high mountains near the Wadi "Pharan," but has given no detailed description of them, nor connected any names with them, further than to designate a part of his map devoted apparently to them by the word Serban. The observant Morison,[1] who was here in 1697, is the only one of the older travellers who has described the Wadi Feiran with any detailed minuteness; and he speaks merely of the desert and the mountain of "Pharan," without distinguishing them by any other name.

Niebuhr tells us that on the 13th of September, and on the seventh day of his journey from Suez, and a hundred and twelve miles from that place, he turned aside from the direct route to Sinai, and entered the vale of Feiran (at the base of Serbal), where his Arab companions lived when not on their wanderings. He gives no detailed account of the mountain, only of the vale running eastward from it, which, in consequence of its abundance of date palms, he prefers to any other part of the Peninsula which he visited. He heard that in the neighbourhood there were the ruins of an ancient city: this he wished to visit; but as his attendants had all dispersed, he was

[1] A. Morison, *Relat. historique, l.c.* Toul. 1704, pp. 114, 115.

unable to find it, and on the following day it was necessary to proceed on his way. Niebuhr conjectured that the name Farân, as he spelled it, was the formerly renowned Pharan, and that it has hardly changed its form in the slightest since the days when the Mosaic account was indited. The mountains which hem it in on both sides are, he says, of sandstone, mingled here and there with patches of red and black granite. It was dry at the time of his visit; but he was told that after heavy and protracted rains the vale is sometimes so filled with water, that it is uninhabitable, and the Arabs have to flee to the mountains. Niebuhr says that he saw only a portion of the whole vale, probably only an outlying arm, and that he was surprised at the small amount of fruit which he met there, the Wadi Farân being so notable for its fruitfulness. But the Arabs told him that the portion to which they went without him, was so abundantly supplied with date orchards, that it would amply meet the wants of many thousands of people; and it was a well-known fact, that from this place, as well as from the gardens west of Jebel Musa, large quantities of grapes, apples, and dates were carried every year to Cairo, to be exchanged for corn and clothing; whereas the Arabs from other and less fruitful districts only took wild goats, charcoal, gum, and small stones for hand-mills. In the middle of September, the time of his visit, the dates were not yet ripe. After turning back from the Wadi Feiran, a four hours' march brought him to the main route towards the south-east, which he had hitherto pursued; and at nightfall of the same day he reached the outlying border of the Jebel Musa district, one hundred and twenty-three miles from Suez.

Morison, who made his pilgrimage to Sinai about the end of the seventeenth century, tells us that he encamped near a large spring in the Wadi Feiran, the only one of the whole neighbourhood where he found human habitations made of stone, and not portable. The village of "Pharan" consists, he says, of a dozen stone huts or hovels, offering at best but a pitiable protection; but on the summit of a very high mountain (?) there are the massive ruins of a castle (?), apparently built by the Saracens as a defence against the Caliphs of Egypt, but destroyed by the latter.

There is no doubt that the seat of a culture not Christian

in its character, alluded to by Antoninus Martyr as existing in the middle of the sixth century, as well as the Christian city of Faran spoken of by Nilus about the close of the fourth century as situated on the "great highway of travel," and in the most densely populated part of the Peninsula, were here, in the Wadi Feiran, little as has been the account made of it by modern travellers. If the observations made by Linant, the engineer of Egypt, who for several years lived during the summer months in Feiran, were communicated to the world, they would doubtless throw much light on the archæological character of the place and its vicinity. It is only since 1815 that we have begun to receive full accounts of the Wadi Feiran. Turner, who explored the place in 1815, Burckhardt in 1816, and Ruppell in 1817, and again in 1826, have contributed much to our knowledge; but it is to Lepsius, whose researches are more recent, that we are indebted for explorations of the highest value.

Turner,[1] an English traveller, who passed through the Peninsula in 1815, reached Wadi Feiran on his return from Sinai, which he left on the 7th of August. He speaks of finding a tamarisk grove on the second day, at a place which he supposed to be the Wadi Feiran, notable for the supplies of manna which were brought thence. Though the tamarisk trees were generally only about ten feet in height, yet so luxuriant is the whole vegetation of the vale, as to form the most marked contrast to the bare rocks which hem it in on every side. The entire district, which partakes of great fruitfulness, is about five miles long, and is full of olive, almond, date, tamarisk, and palm trees. Yet in comparison with its former abundance, when it used to supply Sinai as well as Cairo with fruit, it seems to be but a tangled jungle. It extends from north-west to the south-east; and its stony pathway runs along between gardens, whose eastern sides often exhibited the remains of walls, here and there in continuous lines; and here and there could be seen either natural or artificial caves, extending into the red, white, and grey walls of rock which rise at the sides of the wadi. These motley coloured, shattered walls rise steeply, indeed in some places almost perpendicularly, hundreds of feet, and are overgrown with brush,

[1] W. Turner, *Journ. of a Tour in the Levant*, Lond. 1820.

and are animated here and there by wild goats springing from cliff to cliff. From them a loud and clear echo rings down into the valley. In the shadow of the palm trees lay the scattered tents of the Beduins who live here, gradually diminishing in number towards the extremity of the wadi. Around them, and forming a kind of girdle, Turner saw a number of shattered fragments of stone walls; these he supposed to be the remains of a fallen Arab town. This was at the north-west end of the arable land: the nabactrus (*seder* of the Arabs, *lotus napeca*) which grew around the ruins were the last traces of the great fertility of the Wadi Feiran. Soon the walls closed in again, leaving only that long and narrow passage, beautified only with occasional acacia trees, to which the Beduins give various names, but which is most commonly known as the Wadi Mokatteb. Still, despite Turner's conjecture about the "fallen Arab town," he concluded that the Feiran vale must have been the seat of the ancient church and episcopate of Pharan.

The French expedition, which passed only too hastily through a few years before Turner, in 1800, made some valuable observations on the ruins just alluded to, which they found to be on a plateau ninety feet above the level of the valley, and surrounded by a brick and red sandstone wall. They ascertained them to be the remains of an ancient city, which, according to the traditions both of monks and Beduins, was once inhabited by Christians. On one of the neighbouring heights (the *pic du Moulin*) they discovered the relics of an ancient church, built in the same style with the ruins at the base of the mountain; but in all these architectural remains, together with some grottos hewn in the rock, they did not discover a trace of any remarkable beauty or grandeur.

But far more valuable than these observations were those made by that keen-sighted traveller, Burckhardt, on the occasion of his visit to the Wadi Feiran, and his ascent in 1816 of Mount Serbal. He it was who first made us acquainted with the topographical relations of those short and difficult passages through which the wind sweeps so fiercely that they bear the name of "wind passes," and also of that longer and more accessible way known as the Wadi el Sheikh, which has a very high degree of interest to us, as the great physical link which connects Sinai and Serbal, and which forms a broad

curved cleft, the most massive in character of any in the Peninsula. In his return from Sinai to Serbal, Burckhardt did not traverse the whole extent of the Wadi el Sheikh, but after one day's journey from the convent he turned down from the Raha into the Wadi Selâf, a deep gorge which plunges down a descent of almost 2700 feet before it enters the western end of the Wadi Sheikh, and thus entered the Feiran vale; but upon his first going over the route in the spring of the same year, he had come from the north-west over the regular road to Hebron (which is for a part of its course the most northern Suez route, and the one taken by Robinson, Russegger, and others), and had passed by the western mouth of the Wadi Selâf, and had traversed the whole of the Wadi Sheikh. Of it he has given us a carefully prepared and accurate account, which subsequent travellers—among them Seetzen, Robinson, Russegger, Lepsius, and Koller—have confirmed: so that we are now in the possession of so full an array of facts, as to allow a monograph to be prepared, which shall contain conclusions applicable to the physical structure of the whole adjacent region, and particularly valuable for the elucidation of the physical character of the Serbal group and the Wadi Feiran.

DISCURSION I.

THE WADI EL SHEIKH—THE BROAD CURVED CLEFT LINKING THE SINAI AND THE SERBAL MOUNTAIN GROUPS.

The Wadi el Sheikh, from its commencement at the Raha plain, where its height above the sea is about 5000 feet, falls, in its descent to its confluence with the Wadi Selâf, about 2700 feet. Yet its downward course does not terminate there. Still onward, to the narrow pass called el-Bueb, its descending way continues without any interruption; for although no rigid measurements have been taken of the height of the latter portion above the sea, yet it has been noticed that the waters which tumble down from the Raha plain do not cease their flow and stagnate there, but continue onward till they reach the Wadi Feiran, and then through this and the Wadi Hebran make their way to the sea. During the violent rain-storms which sometimes sweep over the Peninsula, the Wadi el Sheikh con-

ducts such a body of water to the Feiran vale, that it resembles a lake. Yet this is of most unfrequent occurrence; for the rains which fall in this region are always temporary, never continuous, and are often withheld so long, that all traces disappear from the surface of the ground, and even the springs themselves become dry. There are sometimes entirely rainless years; but when this is not the case, and the whole country is flooded, the Wadi el Sheikh becomes the recipient of countless watercourses, and conducts the streams which they pour into it down to the low vale of Feiran at its end. But whether in time of rain or in time of drought, the great cleft always remains; and from the confluence with Wadis Osh, Selaf, and Akhdar, the Sheikh rises towards Sinai and sinks towards Serbal. Burckhardt's account is the most full, and must be our main guide.

As the traveller emerges from the Wadi Osh, and its neighbours the Berah and the Akhdar, and enters the Wadi el Sheikh, his feet pass from the sandstone and limestone of the northern and western portions of the Peninsula, and touch for the first time the soil of the central granite region. One of the first signs of the change is the taste of the water, which becomes sweet, pure, and enjoyable. In all the sandstone and limestone regions it is brackish or bitter, where there is water at all. To this rule Burckhardt adduces only two exceptions. Even in the Wadi Osh the traveller begins to perceive that he has reached a differently tasting water.

"From the Wadi Osh," says Burckhardt, "we continued in a S.E. direction, ascending slightly: the valley then becomes narrower. In two hours we came to a thick wood of tamarisk or tarfa, and found many camels feeding on their thorny shoots. It is from this evergreen tamarisk, which grows abundantly in no other part of the Peninsula, that the manna is collected. We now approached the central summits of Mount Sinai, which we had in view for several days. Abrupt cliffs of granite, from six to eight hundred feet in height, surround the avenues leading to the elevated platform to which the name of Sinai is specifically applied. These cliffs enclose the holy mountain on three sides, leaving the E. and N.E. sides only, towards the Gulf of Akaba, more open to the view. On both sides of the wood of tarfa trees extends a range of low hills, of a substance called

by the Arabs *tafal*, which I believe to be principally a *detritus* of the feldspar of granite, but which at first sight has all the appearance of pipe-clay: it is brittle, crumbles easily between the fingers, and leaves upon them its colour, which is a pale yellow. The Arabs sell it at Cairo, where it is in request for taking stains out of cloth, and where it serves the poor instead of soap, for washing their hands; but it is chiefly used to rub the skins of asses during summer, being supposed to refresh them, and to defend them against the heat of the sun.

"At the end of three hours we entered the above-mentioned cliffs by a narrow defile, about forty feet in breadth, with perpendicular granite rocks on both sides. The ground is covered with sand and pebbles, brought down by the torrent, which rushes from the upper region in the winter time.

"In a broader part of the pass an insulated rock, about five feet high, is shown as a place upon which Moses once rested, whence it has the name of Mokad Seidna Musa (Moses' Resting-place): the Beduins keep it covered with green or dry herbs, and some of them kiss it, or touch it with their hands, in passing by." From the accounts of earlier travellers—for example, of Davison and E. Wortley Montagu in 1761—we learn that then this stone was called Mohammed's Resting-place,—a circumstance which, like so many others, indicates the confusion which exists in the Arab mind about these two personages, and the consequent interchange of their names.

A little beyond the valley widens, the mountains on both sides receding, between which the Wadi el Sheikh advances southward with a continual slight ascent. On the east side the traveller passes a narrow gorge bearing the name of Wadi Mohsen; and in the background formed by this divergent wadi a well is seen, bearing the same name with the wadi in which it is found. At the outlet of this gorge there are knolls, in some cases a hundred feet high, made up of fallen debris alone. At this point the character of the granite changes, the fine-grained stone, in which masses of pure quartz are found, giving place to the coarser stone of the Sinai mountains. The shape of the peaks changes also; the softness of outline which characterizes those on the northern district disappears, and the jagged, wild, and grotesque forms which made the central mountains conspicuous begin to appear. An hour's march

beyond the Bir Mohsen there is a second defile, in which is found the spring known as the Abu Szueir or Abu Suweirah, lying about four thousand feet above the Red Sea.

The Wadi el Sheikh again widens, and eight or ten hours farther on the traveller comes to the tomb of Sheikh Saleh, from whom, in all probability, the wadi has derived its name. To the west, an hour and a half away, Burckhardt saw, upon a high hill, a spot of fine pasturage, called el-Fureia: there are now cultivated fields, some trees, and the remains of a convent. The place is in the possession of Ulad Said Arabs. Seven hours and a half farther on is the Raha plain and the Convent of St Catherine.

The vegetation found in the neighbourhood of this place makes it very attractive, in comparison with the savage wildness which prevails almost everywhere else in the Peninsula. A little rough stone house, containing the coffin of the sainted sheikh, surrounded by a wooden partition and green twigs, is the central object of interest to all Beduin pilgrims. Around the walls their poor offerings are suspended, consisting mainly of ostrich feathers, ostrich eggs, camel halters and bridles, bits of silk, strips of ribbon, and the like.

Regarding this Arab saint the accounts are at variance. By some he is said to be the founder of the tribe of Szowabha; by others he is reputed to be the eminent Moslem prophet Szaleh, of the tribe Thamoud, and mentioned in the Koran; by others again, and Burckhardt numbers himself among these, he is thought to have been a local saint. Seetzen, who was here in 1807, on his way from Beersheba to Sinai, calls the place the Chapel Nebbi Szaleh, *i.e.* of the prophet of that name; near by he saw a little stone hut, and a burying-ground of the Beduins. He says that the Szowabha, Mezeny, and the Aleygat tribes, all make pilgrimages to this shrine.

"Once in every year," says Burckhardt, "all the tribes of the Towara repair hither in pilgrimage, and remain encamped in the valley round the tomb for three days. Many sheep are then killed, camel-races are run, and the whole night is passed in dancing and singing. The men and the women are dressed in their best attire. The festival, which is the greatest among these people, usually takes place in the latter part of June, when the Nile begins to rise in Egypt and the plague subsides,

and a caravan leaves Sinai immediately afterwards for Cairo. It is just at this period, too, that the dates ripen in the valleys of the lower chain of Sinai, and the pilgrimage to Sheikh Szaleh thus becomes the most remarkable period in the Beduin year." Yet notwithstanding the solemnity of the feast at the grave of Sheikh Szaleh, whose name is hardly second to that of Moses among the Arabs, the true "date harvest" feast cannot take place there, in consequence of the fact that the palm cannot flourish at so great a height as that portion of the Wadi Sheikh where the tomb is found. That great "date harvest" feast which is held in the Wadi Feiran is, moreover, rather a secular than a religious affair, while that at Sheikh Szaleh's grave is purely religious. Schimper, who was present on one of these occasions, has given in manuscript an account of such an observance, though he apprehended it to be given in honour of Moses (?), and not of an Arab sheikh. He says that a camel was killed with some ceremony, prayers were repeated, the flesh of the camel distributed and eaten with relish by all, himself included, and the blood offered as a gift to the Lord and to Moses. Coffee was then taken, and then pipes; and with smoking the remainder of the day was spent. Two hours after sunset the dancing commenced. This, although accompanied with singing and the clapping of hands, was not at all hilarious in its character, but was exceedingly modest, sedate, and withal graceful. It did not seem like revelry, but like a true religious commemoration. On the following day they all went to Sinai, and there offered a sheep in sacrifice.

W. Montagu[1] gives us also an account of religious observances at the tomb of Sheikh Szaleh. His Arab guides approached the place with great reverence of demeanour, repeated a prayer before it, and strewed the heads of their camels with dust, in order that those poor creatures might share in the benefits which their prayer was expected to bring. Immediately afterwards a wether was slaughtered and consumed.

Tischendorf has also given a glowing account[2] of one of these great feasts at the tomb of Sheikh Szaleh, or Salech, as he spells the name. It very happily rounded out his pilgrimage to Sinai, and formed the last step of his journey. "I now

[1] J. Fazakerley, *Journ. l.c.* in R. Walpole's *Trav.* p. 376, Note.

[2] Tischendorf's *Travels in the East*, Eng. edition, p. 93 et seq.

resolved," he says, "upon stopping during the festival of Salech: my guides were rejoiced at this, although they had not dared to express one wish for it. In company with the troop that had advanced to meet me, I entered the large common tent. This tent, in which from forty to fifty sat in a circle, was completely closed only on two sides. On the north it offered a view of the herds, dromedaries, and camels, and the baggage; towards the south a fire was burning, at which coffee was made with all despatch, and forty steps beyond it stood the grave of the prophet freshly coloured, recalling to my mind and giving new meaning to the Saviour's words, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness.' The prince, or superior of the chieftains, sat by the fire with his coffee, as the general host. His appearance was dignified and pleasing. He was one of the largest of the number, with manly, energetic features, brown eyes, and a dark beard. On his head was a white turban, from the centre of which was perceived the red fez. He had no covering upon his feet; but his chief garment was an unusually long white gown of light woollen stuff. Several smaller tents were connected in a line with one large one, and these were closed on all sides—even the entrance was hung with carpets.

"In the course of a brief hour the festal procession around the tomb of the prophet commenced. The women were present, most decorously clad, and wholly concealed. To the sound of that oft-mentioned music which oriental women produce with their mouths, the procession ascended the hill, passed around the tomb, and then entered it, where the women appeared to pray for a short time. In the procession young fellows led the sacrificial lambs, from which, upon the summit of the hill, a couple of locks were shorn from the brow, and an incision made upon it. This was followed by the general slaughter of these fifty or sixty lambs. They were then hung up at the tents, skinned, and cut into pieces by means of the large knives, which served also as weapons or short swords. Whilst the meal was preparing at the fire, the interval was occupied by dromedary-races. This was an attractive spectacle. From four to six cavaliers galloped past the tents upon

these noble animals, which were caparisoned with costly carpets and ornaments of mother-of-pearl. Then followed the feast of meat and oatmeal bread; a jug of excellent water was the only drink. The dance which was to follow was broken up by a violent rain-storm. The head sheikh took it very good-naturedly, however, and said, 'God sent it, and therefore it must be good.'"

Russegger, who took the road from the convent at Sinai through the Wadi el Sheikh as far as to the place where the caravan route to Suez diverges to the north-west, that to the Tih mountains to the north, and that to Akaba to the north-east, and who then climbed up to the high rolling plains which border the Sheikh wadi on the north, tells us that up to the place where the main routes diverge, the granite of the Sinai group is found—a coarse red rock intersected frequently with great veins of greenstone and porphyry. The face is usually bare, and great fissures, sometimes extending vertically entirely to the base, are of frequent occurrence. But on emerging from the Wadi el Sheikh, and stepping on the broad outlying plateaus of the Tih range, an immediate change is perceived in the geology of the country, the granite being exchanged for sandstone. But without going farther in that direction now, I may allude a little more in detail to the varieties of stone found in the immediate neighbourhood of the Wadi Sheikh. In that notable passage, called usually the Pass of the Winds, which forms the most direct link between the Serbal and the Sinai group, there is a large amount of porphyry present in the granite, and here and there are detached masses of it existing in great quantities. On the other hand, the granite which is found in the southern portion of the Sinai mountains is the same in character with that found among the central peaks of the group.

This granite is, with some slight modifications, the same in its geological character from the base of the mountains to the summit; moreover, it is the same with the celebrated granite of Assuan on the Nile, and of Mount Szegeti in Sennaar. It very readily cleaves, and with great precision, and sometimes the face is left as smooth as a glass, where masses have been detached by natural agencies, and have fallen. It is not to be understood by the reader that this granite is entirely homo-

geneous in its character: it is not, and veins of greenstone are found, extending even to the very summits, yet not forming an important element. The Sehab plateau is the geological connecting link between Serbal and Sinai: it is not level, but rises towards Sinai, which stands at its extremity like a high wall; while Serbal, with its no less jagged front and pinnacled brow, terminates the lower end. Still, above this Sehab plateau may be seen the long, but only moderately lofty, Jebel Fureia; and from this extends, in a south-eastward direction, the real granite heart of the group. Upon the walls of the great granitic mountains there may be seen the fairest play of colours—the red of the rose, the red of blood, the white and the blue of quartz, the yellow, green, and black of the scanty mica.

There is a quality in the granite of Mount Sinai which is worthy of an allusion here. The first five hundred feet of the ascent from the convent reveal only a coarse-grained red granite; but at the height of about half a thousand feet, the character of the rock changes, the grain becomes finer, and there is an accession of quartz. This reaches to the very summit, and the stone of the upper part cleaves into small and sharp-angled pinnacles, at once distinguishable from the coarse and rudely severed walls which form the base. This fine-grained granite is very like that of the granite mountains of southern Germany, but very unlike the coarse ground stone, rich in feldspar, of Norway and Sweden, as well as of the boulders of Pomerania and of northern Germany.

Mount St Catherine deviates the most widely from the granite type of the Sinai group, and partakes so largely of a porphyritic character, that Russegger, who has carefully studied the geology of this whole region, and whose third volume contains the most elaborate account of it, has called a mass of granite porphyry. This careful geologist was the first to call attention to the fact, that the line of porphyritic rock strikes directly across the Sinai group of mountains from north-east to south-west. In the gorge of the Ledja, the porphyritic rock is found extending much lower than on the eastern side of Sinai. And this law seems to run through the entire porphyritic rocks, that outside of the Sinai group of mountains those rocks run in a general direction of east and west, but

that within that group, whether they are found singly in exceedingly numerous veins, or in immense masses of a pure quality, they run in a general direction of north-east and south-west. For enormous masses of pure porphyry are sometimes found; and they have this peculiarity, that whereas the granite is often interpenetrated with porphyritic veins, the porphyry is never interpenetrated with granite veins.

Having gone through the Wadi el Sheikh in the direction leading upwards and towards Sinai, and having examined with some care its physical characteristics, it now remains to reverse our course, and trace it downward from the Raha plain to the Wadi Feiran. This single wadi deserves the most careful study, and will richly repay it; not only because it is the largest feature of its kind in the whole Peninsula, but because it is the only available route open to the children of Israel on their way from Egypt to Mount Sinai: for the narrow pass, now often taken by travellers, called the Nakb el Hawy, or Passage of the Winds, was entirely useless to them; no number of people could have marched through, still less could herds of cattle, or laden beasts of burden. It is therefore almost certain that the Hebrews journeyed by way of the broad Wadi el Sheikh.

These two circumstances, the magnitude of the wadi, and its almost certain use by the children of Israel, conjoined with the additional sanctity imparted by the grave of the Arab saint interred there, have made the Wadi el Sheikh (pronounced Wadi e Shech) the most celebrated of all the Sinaitic passes. It is, too, the most inhabited of all; for although there seems to be no population in the wadi itself, which seems to the traveller deserted and silent, yet the neighbouring gorges, so many of which open into this great central duct, are full of life. As we get nearer the mountains the supply of water increases; and the traveller, on penetrating these gorges to their extreme limits, finds this to be the case here. A supply of water leads to pasturage: this feeds the Arab's goats and camels, and yields him the few simple elements which he needs to make up his home. This explains, too, why not the lofty mountains alone, but every little cliff, knoll, gorge, spring, every physical feature, however minute and insignificant, has its name,—a fact which sets almost all travellers in amazement. The Arabs

know the names of only the most marked objects when they are some distance from their home, but they have a most refined nomenclature for the region where they live.

The Wadi el Sheikh is conspicuous for still another reason. Its tarfa or tamarisk trees yield the best supplies of manna, of which I shall speak more at length in another place. But now I will briefly recapitulate the facts brought to our knowledge by two careful explorers: Lepsius, who passed through the wadi on the 25th and 26th of March 1835; and Baron Koller, who was there in the same month 1840, but who, although not going farther down in the wadi, after leaving the convent, than to the place where the routes to Hebron and to Akaba diverge, yet saw the country under circumstances so peculiar as to merit a special allusion to them.

Baron Koller tells[1] us, on his first day's march from Mount Sinai, he entered the Wadi el Sheikh at Mount Aaron: at the opening the wadi was about four hundred paces broad. He had hardly entered it, however, when there burst upon him a furious rain-storm, which compelled him to desist from his journey, dismount, and pitch his tents. But to his amazement the rain showed no signs of ceasing, and continued to fall in torrents through the whole day and the next till three o'clock in the afternoon. During its fall, the rocks which hem in the wadi were converted into little picturesque cascades, and the whole appearance of nature was as utterly unlike its ordinary aspect there as can be conceived. The result of this singular experience solved a problem which had till then been an open one, and showed us that there do at times the most violent rain-storms sweep over the Peninsula, wearing deep furrows in the soil, and plunging down vast masses of debris from the rocks. The truth of this account has been doubted by Fazakerley,[2] simply on the ground that it does not chime with the results of his observations; a weak argument, and one which is easily overthrown by facts, notwithstanding the successive years which sometimes transpire without the fall of any rain. When Fazakerley was there, the Arabs insisted that there had been none for five years.

[1] Extract from Baron Koller's itinerary of his tour to Petra from Mount Sinai to Akaba, in *Journ. of the Roy. Geog. Soc. of London*, 1842, vol. xii.

[2] J. Fazakerley, journ. in R. Walpole's *Travels*, p. 367, Note.

On the second day's march, Baron Koller found the Wadi el Sheikh expand from a width of four hundred to eight hundred paces. Pursuing his way, he traversed the narrow pass el-Wuttaijah, which conducted him to a broad plain whose name he calls Jeremiyeh. Soon after he left the Wadi el Sheikh, and took a cross wadi called Zalakha or Sélega, which brought him to el-Ain, the place where the regular Hebron and Akaba routes diverge. He then continued his journey to the latter place.

Lepsius has given an admirable account of his journey in March 1845 through the Wadi el Sheikh; but it exists, much to my regret, in manuscript. From it, however, I can draw some facts which will throw light on the topography of the region.

Lepsius passed into the wadi in a north-easterly direction, skirting the eastern base of the Jebel Fureia, and by the evening of the second day he had traversed the entire great curve which the Sheikh makes, and had reached the Wadi Rimm at the foot of Serbal. Along the sides of the wadi, through which the camel path glides tortuously, there are abundant loose and broken rocks: but upon them there are no inscriptions; the hard nature of the stone having protected them from the hand of man even in the very neighbourhood of Sinai, where pilgrims might especially wish to leave their records. All along the way he found that all the minor objects had their name; every little bend in the road even had its special designation. He also saw the mounds or hillocks of debris in the wadi which Russegger mentioned; but as these are the result of the action of the elements, and are more or less mutable in their character, he found with much reason that he could not adjust their position to Russegger's description. A little more than an hour's march beyond those rubbish piles, the wadi narrowed, and he passed through a defile which he calls el-Bueb, the gate, but which is evidently not the one mentioned by Lord Lindsay and other travellers, which terminates the Wadi Sheikh, and forms the entrance to the Wadi Feiran. The name is probably not an uncommon one, and is applied to both the narrow passes of the Wadi Sheikh; the one mentioned by Lindsay, and the one mentioned by Lepsius, where the wadi begins to run west, leaving the Jebel Oef at the east.

Soon after the Sheikh turns to the south-west, and at that

place the abundance of tarfa trees begins, which gives to the wadi the name by which Koller, Ruppell, and others, have called it—the Wadi Tarfa. The tarfa or tamarisk tree is the tree which yields that sweet, nutritious, and mysterious manna which some have supposed to be the food of the children of Israel; a tree which, although found in other parts of the wilderness, is not met at any other place in any abundance. Nor is there in the Wadi Sheikh a long-continued grove of them; after an hour's march they become sparse, and soon disappear. There are, besides, a great number of shrubs growing in the wadi.

Lepsius continued on his way, meeting no inscriptions as yet, but finding every object which he passed, however unimportant, bearing a name. At one little wadi which opened into the Sheikh he halted, allowing his guide to go up it, and procure at his home, which was there, a new camel saddle. A large number of goats and donkeys issued from it, and crossed the Wadi el Sheikh, disappearing in another wadi which diverged on the other side. He soon found an increased growth of the retem or rattam; and as he drew near to Serbal he passed a rock covered with inscriptions. This was near the corner formed by the branching of the Wadi Sehab to the left. The inscriptions were sharply and carefully cut, and easily copied. Soon after he came to a second rock with inscriptions, after passing which the Wadi el Sheikh bore to the north-north-west. Leaving it here, Lepsius turned to the left into the Wadi Rimm, which leads to the very foot of Serbal; and on a hill close by, on the summit of which he found a ruined stone hut and a spring of water, he encamped for the night. In this Wadi Rimm, rocky as it is, and well adapted for inscriptions, but not especially interesting, Lepsius found not the trace of an inscription.

Before taking leave of the Wadi el Sheikh to pass to the consideration of Wadi Feiran and Serbal, it will be well to take up a subject alluded to but a moment or two since—the tarfa gum or manna, which is found so abundantly at one spot in the Wadi el Sheikh. It is a question of great interest, whether the exudation of that tree was identical, as has been claimed by some, with the manna which was used as food by the children of Israel.

NOTE.—*The Manna of the Sinai Peninsula.*

The Tamarisk and its Diffusion—The Manna-Rain of the Israelites—The Manna found in other parts of the Earth, especially that of Africa and Hither Asia.

The tamarisk or tarfa tree of the Arabs (*Tamarix gallica mannifera*, Ehrb.), which is generally associated with the production of manna, is by no means universally found upon the Peninsula; indeed, it is wholly wanting in the eastern part of it. Nor is it found at all heights, for the manna-producing variety cannot grow at an elevation of 3000 feet above the sea. It is therefore not found throughout the whole central mountain region, and in the Wadi el Sheikh it is not seen excepting in the part below the height just mentioned. Nor does this tree flourish and yield its gum in the extremely dry regions of the Peninsula. These limitations exclude it of course from a large part of the whole land, and hem it in within a very restricted domain. The places where it is to be found are well known to the Beduins and the monks, and their accounts entirely coincide respecting these localities. It will be necessary for us first to see what the facts are, as they exist now, regarding the production of manna, to compare the various sweet exudations which are found at different parts of the earth, before we arrive at the data which we need to interpret the Mosaic account of the manner in which the children of Israel were supplied with bread.

Carsten Niebuhr, who carried so keen and observant an eye, was anxious to inquire into the nature of that tarfa gum which is found in the Sinai Peninsula, but his visit was made too late in the year to accomplish this object, the supply having all ceased for the year at the time when he passed through the country; but in Persia and the Euphrates district he afterwards had an opportunity to examine the manna which is found in that region.[1] Many of the earlier travellers—Rauwolf, Fabri, Della Valle, Thevenot, and others—were doubtless familiar with the ancient story of the fall of manna, but they seem to have

1 See Niebuhr's *Travels*, Eng. edition. Also Sam. Bocharti *de variis Mannæ speciebus et de genere nominis Mannæ Desert.* in *Oppid.* ed. 1692, fol. tom. iii.; *Geographia Sacra, Chanaan*, fol. 871–879. Compare also Rosenmüller, *Handbuch der bibl. Alterthumskunde*, vol. iv. 1830, pp. 316–327.

taken no pains to discover whether any analogous phenomenon appears at present. The acute German traveller, Bernard von Breydenbach,[1] who wrote in 1483, and the French Pierre Belon du Mans, who visited the East in 1550, are honourable exceptions. The first of these two remarks accurately, that in the month of August there is found in the valleys near to Sinai a certain manna, or "bread from heaven," which the monks and Arabs collect and sell to the pilgrims who come that way. It falls, he says, at daybreak, or just before, in drops like dew, or hoar-frost, clinging in drops to the rocks, the twigs, and the grass, and is as sweet as honey. Pierre Belon remarks that the monks collect a liquid kind of manna, which they call *terengabin*, and which is different from the solid kind: the Arabs take it down to Cairo in little pots and sell it: it is the same which Hippocrates called the honey of cedars. He discriminates[2] between this manna and other kinds, but he does not specify any special locality in the Peninsula as particularly remarkable for it. The name *terengabin* (*terandshubin* is the original Persian name, according to Büsching and Rosenmüller, for two words *ter* and *enkjubin*, signifying moist honey) is also used in Avicenna's[3] account, yet in a different usage from that of Belon and the Sinaitic monks of that time. But Morison,[4] a French canon, who passed in 1697 through the Wadi Feiran (he thinks it in the ancient wilderness of Sin), remarks that "the God of Israel has determined to perpetuate that ancient miracle to the end of time; He still lets manna fall regularly in the months of July and August. The Arabs collect it in the morning, because at noon it melts and runs. It is white like snow, and occurs in little globules of the size of peas, and can be spread on bread like honey. At nightfall, when the air grows chill again, it hardens like wax. If I may venture to say it," says the good canon, "I confess without reserve, that

[1] B. v. Breydenbach, *Beschreibung der Reise der Wallfahrt u. s. w. im Reissbuche des Heiligen Landes*, Th. i. Frankf. a. M. 1609, fol. 193.

[2] Pierre Belon du Mans, *Observations de choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Judée, etc.*, Paris 1554, lib. ii. ch. lxv. fol. 129.

[3] Gesenius, note to Burckhardt's *Reisen* (Ger. ed.), ii. p. 1079; following Fabri, *Historia Mannæ*, in Reiskii et Fabricii *opusc. med. ex monumentis Arabum*, p. 115.

[4] A. Morison, *Relat. historique d'un voy. au Mont Sinai, etc.*, Toul. 1704, p. 91.

I consider this to be the same manna which was eaten in Moses' time; for it tastes just as that tasted, which, as we read, was needed in a time of want and hunger, and more sorely wanted, too, than it is now in the same country." As early as Morison's day the Arabs had begun to collect it, and to sell it to the monks at the convent. Morison's satisfactory account has been completely confirmed by subsequent travellers.

Within really recent times, Seetzen, who has been quoted by Burckhardt, has done more than any other to make us acquainted with the fact, that even now they collect every year a really excellent kind of manna (which they call *manu*) from the tarfa (*el-tarphe, tamarix*), a shrub-like tree which grows plentifully in some of the wadis. The gathering of it occurs after Easter, and mainly in June and July. In his journal, Seetzen tells us that the *tamarix gallica* is mainly found in the Wadis Sheikh, Feiran, and Gharundel. In the Wadi el Sheikh the Jebalije gather it in the early morning for the monks of the convent, as it will melt at a later period of the day. The drops exude from the bark of the tree during the hottest season of the year, which is generally in July, and collect on the twigs in small globules, which may be compared to pearls. Sometimes the manna season is reduced to a single month, and even to half a month.

When Seetzen was at the convent on his first visit, the monks had no supply on hand; and as it was not the time of year when it exudes from the trees, he failed to see it. From what he could learn, however, he was able to confirm Morison's account in many particulars, and to see that it is for many reasons highly probable that the manna of the children of Israel was identical with the gum of the tamarisk tree; yet he was troubled by that allusion in Num. xi. 8 to its being beaten in mortars, and was inclined to think that it very seldom acquired sufficient hardness for that, but that it might have been rubbed in mills, and thus shaped into a form suitable for baking. Yet, on the whole, Seetzen did not coincide with the theory which makes the present manna identical with that which supplied the Israelites with food, but leaned rather to the supposition that it was the gelatinous and nutritive gum of the acacia, still agreeable for chewing. In Seetzen's opinion both may have been alluded to by the great Hebrew

lawgiver, and the language of the passage in Numbers has been intended to cover both. In this I cannot agree; for with this interpretation how are we to understand the passage in Ex. xvi. 21, "And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted"? On Seetzen's second visit—Jan. 10, 1809—he saw the *tamarix gallica* growing at the Wadi Taib, and had the satisfaction of finding much manna on the branches. It was of the consistency of honey, and in some cases had run to the end of twigs, and dropped upon the ground, and upon the tamarisk leaves which strewed the ground. In the morning he found it, but later in the day it melted and disappeared. The globules resembled wax, and each was about the size of a mastich grain.

Burckhardt, whose attention to the tarfa tree was awakened by Seetzen, sought to enlarge the knowledge which had been gained by his predecessor, and to ascertain all the facts which might bear upon the subject. He studied particularly the tarfa trees of the Wadi el Sheikh, for there they are found quite isolated, whereas in other parts of the Peninsula they are found mingled with other trees, and attaining a far less growth. He discovered the name *manu* in usé among the Beduins, and recognised the same qualities attributed to it in the Mosaic record.

Burckhardt informs us further, that it exudes from the thorns or spines of the tamarisk in the month of June, and falls upon the leaves, twigs, and branches which always strew the ground beneath it, where it hardens, or else melts and entirely disappears if the sun fall upon it. The Arabs gather it, clarify it, boil it, press the mass through a coarse cloth, put it in leather bags, and keep it sometimes as long as till the next year, using it as honey, spreading it over their bread or dipping their bread in it, to make it palatable. Burckhardt did not learn that they ever make cakes out of it. Even in the convent a supply of it is kept in the cool cellars by the monks; and theirs, when placed on the warm hand, begins almost immediately to soften, and if held for five minutes exposed directly to the sun's rays, it liquefies to such an extent as to run. Burckhardt never saw it so hard that it could be beaten in a mortar. The colour is a dirty yellow (the Swedish scholar

Eurman, quoted by von Oedman, says that when it falls in the night upon clean rock it is white as snow, and retains that purity of colour), the taste sweet, slightly aromatic, and something like that of honey; when taken in considerable quantities, it is a purgative.

Manna can only be collected, according to Burckhardt, in years when there is much rain; but the entire sum produced in the whole country does not exceed five or six hundred pounds, and this is mainly consumed by the Beduins themselves, who consider it one of the greatest delicacies which their land furnishes. The gathering season is usually in June, though sometimes in May; it lasts for nearly six weeks, and occasionally extends as late even as August, but in rainless or very dry years there is none at any time.

Burckhardt first supposed that manna is only to be found in the Wadi el Sheikh, possibly in the Wadi Nazeb, south-east of Sinai; but he afterwards discovered that the tamarisk trees in the Wadi Feiran[1] yield it also. He adds the important observation, that the same species of tamarisk is found in all parts of Arabia which he had visited,—in Nubia, on the Euphrates, on the Astaboras (Tacazze), in all parts of the Bedja, as well as in the Hedjas,—as one of the most common productions, but that he never heard of the tree yielding manna except in the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Sinai. He acknowledges, however, that in other places he had not instituted any very careful inquiry into the matter. He remarks that the tamarisk is more rich in sap than the other trees of the desert, and that when all other growing things are parched and withered, it remains green and flourishing. The remarks which Gesenius[2] has appended in his German edition of Burckhardt's *Travels* relating to the subject do not give us any special confirmation of these facts, but are merely quotations relating to the appearance of manna in other parts of the world.

What Burckhardt did for Seetzen, in diffusing a knowledge of his observations on this subject throughout Europe, Ruppell[3]

[1] Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*, p. 619.

[2] Gesenius' *Burckhardt*, vol. ii. pp. 1079, 1080.

[3] E. Ruppell, *Lettre* ii. in v. Zach, *Correspond. Astronom.* Gènes 1826, vol. xv. No. 1, pp. 29, 30.

has done for Ehrenberg, whose curious inquiries outstripped all his predecessors. "Manna," he writes in a letter to von Zach, dated at Tor, April 23, 1826, "is a honey-like excretion from a little insect, dropped at its pairing time upon the leaves of the tarfa bush in the Arabian valleys. The shrub is found plentifully throughout Nubia and Arabia, but the insect is lacking." At a later date he says:[1] "The tarfa bush, from which the celebrated manna drops, is found in some of the wadis of Arabia Petræa, and in considerable abundance, particularly in Wadi Feiran. Dr Ehrenberg was the first to discover, in 1824, that this manna really proceeds from insects, which he carefully observed, and of which he has since given an account. I received my intelligence from a Greek at Tor, and communicated it to von Zach in 1826, not knowing that the discovery was due to Ehrenberg. Honour to whom honour is due." Von Zach's note to this communication is merely a quotation from Niebuhr, that the Arabs called this production *manu essema, i.e.* bread from heaven, and an adducing, as Gesenius had done, of two other kinds of manna. He also states that Michaelis had erred in supposing it to be analogous to the Calabrian manna (the *manna orni* of the apothecaries, an exudation of the ash, *fraxinus ornus*), or in thinking that it issued from a puncture made by an insect; that it really is a kind of wild honey, like that which has been called Jonathan's and John the Baptist's; and that the food of the Arabs, when they are hard pressed by hunger—which, according to Diodorus' account, is a kind of wild honey (Didor. Sicul. xix. 94, *καὶ μέλι πολὺ τὸ καλούμενον ἄγριον*, with which compare Wesseling's note, tom. ii. ad. p. 361)—wholly agrees with this account, and confirms it.

Ehrenberg, in his own account, sets the time when he discovered the origin of the Sinaitic manna as the year 1823, and names the Wadi Esle, near Mount Sinai (Ain el Man of the Arabs, *i.e. fons mannæ*), as the place where he made the discovery.[2] Many opinions had been diffused regarding the sweet exudations found in a great many countries, and which,

[1] E. Ruppell, *Reisen in Nubien, etc.*, Frankfort 1829, p. 190.

[2] Ehrenberg, *Symbolæ physicæ, seu Icones et Descript. Insectorum, quæ ex itinere, etc.*; Fr. G. Hemprich et Christ. Godofr. Ehrenberg, *Studio novæ et illustratæ reduerunt*, Berolini, folio, 1829, Decas. i. with Tabul.

under the general name of *orni manna*, had become used in medicine, and which Michaelis in his *Biblical Questions* had in mind, and about which he sought to gain information from travellers in Arabia. But, as has been already remarked, Niebuhr did not see the substance, nor the shrub, nor the insect to which manna was ascribed; and Forskal, his companion, says in his *Descriptio Animalium*, xxiii.: Cicadam mannificam aliquam, qualis orni Mannam efficit, ad montem Sinai se minime vidisse.

There have not been lacking others who have thought that the manna of the Israelites has never been seen since their day, that it is a thing wholly after its own kind. With this opinion the monks do not agree, for they often boast that it still falls; only within the limits of their own convent, however,—an idle tale which has deluded many a pilgrim.

The accounts given by Seetzen and by Burckhardt were of value in giving an account of the places where the *tamarix gallica* is found; yet the incorrect description of the tamarisk given by the latter, who ascribes it to thorns or spines, makes it doubtful whether it were not the acacia tree, whose gum is known to commerce, which produces the manna. But no further at any rate could they go, and the question was left by them entirely open why the tamarisk, if that were the manna-producing tree, does not, wherever found, yield manna. That it could rain down manna, so to speak, was substantiated by Ehrenberg, who says that a parallel to the Scripture language, "And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it" (Num. xi. 9), "When the dew that lay upon it was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground" (Ex. xvi. 14), may now often be witnessed. He saw it drop like rain from the ends of the twigs, the trees having a height of about twenty feet, collected it, and brought it home with him. The question may be asked, whether this tamarisk is much different from the *tamarix gallica*, or very near akin to it. Ehrenberg has given the name *tamarix mannifera* to the variety which yields the manna; but Wellsted tells

representation of the tamarix, coccus, and of the manna (*coccus manniparus*, Ehrb.). Compare Schlechtenthal, *Journ. für Botanik. Linnæa*, 1827, Pt. ii. p. 141; in Poggendorf's *Annalen*, ii. 2, p. 241, etc.

us[1] that that which is found near the sea-coast of the Peninsula bears a very close resemblance to the *tamarix gallica*, while that found more in the interior is somewhat higher, more bushy, and bears a denser foliage. Some of its trees Wellsted found in the Wadi Hebran, at a height of 2000 feet above the sea. The small tender twigs Ehrenberg found covered sometimes with the little insect which is instrumental in producing the manna (*coccus manniparus*, Ehrb.), an elliptical, wax-coloured cochineal kermes, about three lines in length. The incisions were in some places so numerous as to give the twigs a warty aspect. Out of these little punctures (never from the leaves), so small as to be invisible to the eye, there exudes in rainy years a clear sap, which gradually thickens and acquires the consistency of syrup. Before and shortly after sunrise it is hard, and drops to the ground like hail, in which state it is easily gathered in considerable quantities. The production of the *Manna Sinaitica*, exactly corresponding to the *Manna Israelitorum*, by means of this *coccus*, is quite analogous to the production by the *cicada* of the *manna orni* upon the ash (*fraxinus ornus*) in Calabria. Up to the present time the *coccus manniparus* has been found only in the Sinai Peninsula, not in Egypt or elsewhere; whence Ehrenberg concludes that the manna must be ascribed to the coccus rather than to the tamarisk.

There have not been wanting, however, opponents to the view of this very distinguished naturalist, and deniers of Ehrenberg's solution of a problem which has perplexed the minds of men for more than three thousand years. The fact has not been denied, indeed, that the appearance of the coccus is contemporaneous with the production of the manna; but it has been asserted that there is no necessary connection between them—that one is not the cause of the other. And as the whole phenomenon has not been subjected to an examination extending through a whole season, it must be admitted that it is as yet impossible to speak with absolute certainty. Wellsted, who examined the tarfa trees in the month of September, did not discover the coccus, although the tender twigs were sweet to the taste, and retained the odour of manna; and he has denied that there is a necessary connection between the insect and the

[1] L. Wellsted, *Trav. in Arabia*, Lond. 1838, vol. ii. p. 47, etc.

tree in the production of the exudation. Yet he did not notice the fact that, although there might be a sweetish taste on chewing the twigs and the smell of manna, the season of its production had passed at the time of his visit. He confirmed every other particular, however, mentioned by Ehrenberg, and adds that the Beduins, after boiling it and straining it through a coarse cloth, put a part of it away in gourd baskets, sell a part at Cairo, consume a part themselves, and dispose of the rest to the monks at the convent, who in their turn are not loath to exchange it for the money of travellers and pilgrims, sometimes receiving as much as four shillings English for the pound. The amount produced in the whole Peninsula was, so far as he could learn, about seven hundred pounds. Wellsted confirms what we have already recorded, that in rainless years no manna falls, and states that seven such years have been known to follow each other. Taken in large quantities, the manna is slightly purgative, and in this respect is similar to the *manna orni*, from the Calabrian ash, which is used in medicine. Von Schubert, while accepting nearly all of Wellsted's statements, does not agree with him in detecting a resemblance between the appearance of the manna sold by apothecaries, and the manna of the desert of Sinai.

Robinson was the recipient, too, of a little pot of manna from the superior of the convent, accompanied with the remark that sometimes for four or five years none at all could be collected, and that the quantity of it has of late much diminished, owing,[1] I suspect, to the cutting down of the tamarisk trees by the Beduins to make the charcoal which the Viceroy of Egypt exacts of them as a fine to atone for an act of robbery once committed on one of his caravans. Robinson does not add any new information respecting the qualities of the manna, but he is strongly of the same mind with those who do not believe that

1 Robinson appears to doubt the honesty of the superior, and to think that many things which were done in honour of his visit were really done in a spirit of extortion. For many things he was obliged to pay exorbitantly, and the manner in which he was treated in other things is calculated to throw a doubt over the superior's representations of the growing scarcity of manna. Respecting the Arabs' general care of their trees, including the tamarisk, see Bonar's graphic *Desert of Sinai*, p. 266, as well as elsewhere. —ED.

the manna of the present day is identical with that which fed the children of Israel; and even were they identical, he thinks that the making what little grows on the Peninsula meet the wants of two millions of men, not a less miracle than the creation *de novo* of food for them. Of this, however, I shall speak in another place.

Lepsius does not doubt[1] about the identity of the Israelitish manna and that now found, but he does not accept Ehrenberg's view of the method of its production. During his long stay in the valley of the Nile, he, like Burckhardt, Ruppell, and Ehrenberg, met no manna there; and hence he is not at a loss for an explanation of the reason why its appearance in Arabia should have appeared to the Israelites to be a miracle. As Lepsius' account is not published, I will make a brief abstract of those parts which relate to the manna of the desert, even if it involve a repetition, and thus a confirmation of some points which have been already adduced. The fragrance which pervaded the tarfa groves during the months of March and April, and which was ascribed by the Arabs at once to the presence of manna, although preceding its actual appearance by two months, was very peculiar, and corresponded exactly to the sweet taste of the manna drops. At the time when the exudation takes place this fragrance is much heightened. It does not proceed from the leaves, nor yet from the blossoms, for these are inodorous when detached from the tree; but it is only the little manna-producing twigs that are fragrant, and these emit their perfume even when stripped of their leaves. The old boughs which have already yielded the gum are not so fruitful as the young and tender ones which are only coming forth. This seemed to Lepsius to militate against the view that the manna issues from the apertures made by insects, and does not flow from the tree itself. In the manna season he sometimes found twelve to fifteen drops on a twig six inches long, and he thinks a single tree must sometimes have upon it at once from fifty to a hundred thousand drops, and such a grove as that in the Wadi el Sheikh several millions. This immense number of drops, he thinks, militates against the theory that all the apertures are the work of insects, as does also the regularity with which they follow rain and heavy dews, and the fact that

[1] R. Lepsius, manuscript account, 1845.

they do not seem to serve the insect as food, or to be of any use to it. In many drops the coccus is found, but in many it is absent. He suggests the expediency of solving the question by transferring a branch containing the insect to some other district of similar natural conditions, where the experiment might be tried whether the transfer led to the production of manna.

Tischendorf was in the country about the last of May, and while passing through the noted tarfa grove in the Wadi el Sheikh he saw the manna exuding from the boughs in thick syrupy drops, and was surprised to find that the branches of the trees exhaled so strong a fragrance. He saw certain round chrysales, but could find not a single coccus enclosed in any one of them. Swarms of bees had alighted on the trees, attracted by the sweetness.

Lepsius found the fragrance the greatest at the tarfa grove of the Wadi Feiran, which he entered the last of March. The Arabs there ascribed it to the presence of manna. The greatest supply of the gum was, however, obtained at the Wadi el Sheikh; the Beduins there knew nothing about insects being engaged in its production. The abundance of tarfa trees, and consequently of the manna yielded, left no doubt in Lepsius' mind why that part of the wadi has been called by some travellers the Tarfa Kitrin, and the Wadi Tarfa. The size of the drops he describes to be sometimes as large as peas, sometimes to be no larger than pin-heads. The exudation proceeds from the delicate brown twigs, not from the stout white ones. In comparison with the supply gained in the Wadi el Sheikh and in the Wadi Nasb, spoken of by Burckhardt, lying a half-day's journey south of the convent in Wadi Raheba, the amount found in the Wadi Feiran, and in the Wadi Cherba, which leads into the Wadi Selaf, is very meagre. The gathering season is just before the date harvest. Wet years give a good yield, dry ones a scanty one, probably for the reason that the tamarisk requires a great deal of moisture to flourish. The Wadi Taibe besides, as had already been observed by Seetzen, gives a considerable supply of manna. In 1846 there had no manna fallen for two years; the three before these two had, on the contrary, been remarkable for the abundance: the story was current that there had once been five years without any yield of manna.

The gathering season is usually but one month in continuance. In the morning it is hard, in the hot part of the day it melts. When dry, it can be dissolved in water, mixed with butter, and spread on bread: it cannot be beaten to a powder, but may be mixed with meal or flour, and baked; and these may have been the baked manna cakes spoken of in Ex. xvi. 23. Thus far Lepsius.

There have always been strong efforts to discountenance any attempt to establish an identity between the manna which was provided for the children of Israel, and that which the trees of Arabia yield at the present day. There are those, on the one side, who consider the admission of such identity as at war with the acceptance of any miraculous interference of Jehovah in behalf of His people; and, on the other side, there are those who hold the account given in the Mosaic records to be entirely irreconcilable with the results of modern observation. But after a conscientious and thorough examination into all the sources of evidence, after looking into all the details and bringing them together, I am constrained to say that I do not think these two views utterly and intrinsically contradictory and mutually destructive, but believe that they support and confirm each other. So far as concerns the imperilling of a belief in God's power to work miracles, I may be permitted to speak out my full and matured conviction, or rather my living faith, that the whole creation, in all its parts—in its beginning and in its ending, in the things even which transpire now and under our eyes; in the smallest and the largest tokens of divine skill, from the tiniest spire of grass up to the human eye, which speaks the thoughts of the soul; up even to the amazing constitution of man, the most perfect of creatures—is, and is to be, a ceaseless, fathomless series of miracles from the hand of an ever-living and ever-working God. What the wit and reason of man imagine that they conjure up from themselves, and which they invest with a certain grandeur reflected from themselves, is nothing else than one of the great truths of God detached from the side of the countless ones of which we yet know nothing, and brought out of the mysterious darkness into the light where the eye of man sees it. Despite the easy way with which men dismiss miracles by ascribing them to a law of nature, does not, I ask, the law of

nature remain, at the last analysis, all unexplained and dark as ever? To try to harmonize the wonderful acts of God with the laws and arrangements of nature, to spend one's energies as if in a hard task to bring them into accord, just as if they were not in perpetual accord already, is a pitiable task; and he is a poor common spirit, who, dealing with only the last results of God's dealings, the little things merely under his eye, talks about a controversy between nature and God, and brings down the majesty of the Infinite One to the level of his own narrow understanding. Such a man has never learned what the words omnipotence and omniscience mean. The miracles wrought by God remain miracles still, even though we think that we explain them by ascribing them to the powers of nature; for these are themselves, in all correct use of the word, at the foundation miraculous. And that which calls for the explaining away and the clearing up of a mystery, every man of true science knows, is merely the tracing what is obscure back a single stage to another pass, where the mystery is only deepened. And if our knowledge of the powers of nature should suffice to explain the method in which the rain of manna was produced, yet the real miracle is only made more wonderful still; for the more closely we study the real character of the desert, criticise its barrenness, and examine the slight products of its wastes, the more our amazement grows that provision could have been made, and that provision actually was made, for the wants of millions. And a wish to refine or explain away the sublime manifestations of God's power in past times, only displays the blind folly of those who undertake so inglorious an achievement, and shows that they can discern the wonderful deeds of God in the present day just as little as in days gone by. Such men sport with the name of wisdom and knowledge, and claim that they share in those gifts when the eyes are closed to even the suspicion of the greatest fact in the universe—the eternal working of God around us. Knowing how limited is the range of our comprehension, and seeing that we live in a world of supernatural activities, where God's hand may be beheld by him who gazes upward earnestly, devoutly, and with humble and entire faith,—a hand not palsied into inaction, but moving ceaselessly with great and benevolent intent,—to try to close the way of God, and explain all His

actions in the past by the mere experience which we have had of His works and methods, is not only the height of folly, but it is an unhallowed denial of the great truth that we ourselves have been created in the likeness of God, and claim that we, who proudly recognise our own freedom, have no such freedom to grant to the Creator of worlds. And I quote with entire approval Hengstenberg's words,[1] "that science cannot bring itself into conflict with God;" for though many words of that eminent commentator have been thrust aside, this cannot be, nor can we speak lightly of his efforts to bring out all the meaning of the Pentateuch, and to illuminate and illustrate its obscurities. And as we are on our way, taking Sinai in our course, to the peculiar land of miracles, I take occasion to say this once for all, that my point of view may be thoroughly explicit and avowed, before I go on to speak of the biblical manna.

This has been so specifically and characteristically described in the Mosaic account, that the recognition of the article mentioned there could not be very difficult. And even if the description be not so full and minute as could be wished, yet many years were to pass before it was to be subject to the critical examination of this age; and how great has been the progress in the arts of investigation since those rude ages! And Hengstenberg's remark is full of truth, that although there is much that is supernatural in the Mosaic records, yet they were written for the eye of faith, and not for the perusal of philosophers. The supernatural was therefore fully developed, and what is merely and simply natural is thrown into the background as a thing well enough understood already.

I do not feel able to coincide with von Lengerke's[2] comment on Ex. xvi. 4, which puts a mythical interpretation upon the words "rain from heaven," and asks triumphantly how it could rain from heaven and not from the clouds. The same expression Oedman[3] tried to solve by the hypothesis that the dew which fell was sweet,—a view utterly without foundation, as is confirmed by the statement of Wellsted, that it is still

[1] E. W. Hengstenberg, *Pentateuch*, Pt. i. 1842, p. 289.
[2] Lengerke, *Kenaan*, Pt. i. p. 444.
[3] Rosenmüller a.a.O. iv. p. 324.

the general belief of the Beduins that manna falls directly from heaven, as it did in the days of Moses.

The view that the manna of Israel was a gift wholly after its own kind and never repeated since, and that, like the quails, it was something entirely new to the desert, has been shared by most fathers of the church and many later writers, among whom may be mentioned Robinson, von Raumer, and Lord Lindsay. The last has gone so far as to assert that it is absurd to try to trace in the turpentine-flavoured gum of the tarfa any resemblance to the taste of the Israelitish manna. Von Lengerke is also of this view, but only for the reason that he follows Robinson word for word. Carl von Raumer,[1] however, after a critical examination of the whole subject, both in its philological bearings and in its relations to natural history, declares, as the result of his comparison of the manna described by Moses and that which is now found, that it is *impossible* that they should have been the same.

Josephus must have been of a different opinion, otherwise he could not have said that, even in his time, through the mercy of Jehovah, the same substance which the Hebrews called μάννα continued to fall in the same locality where the law was given (Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* iii. 1, 6: ἔτι καὶ νῦν ὑεται πᾶς ἐκεῖνος· ὁ τόπος). And has there not been a mistake in the matter? for Moses and Aaron had fulfilled the divine requirement (Ex. xvi. 32, 34), "Fill an omer of it, to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept." And if commentators are inclined to lay special stress upon the word "rain," it only needs to be kept in mind that that is the very word which the Arabs use at the present day of the tamarisk manna, although they themselves gather it from under the trees. Josephus traces the etymology of the word manna to a Hebrew interrogative which expressed the general astonishment—what is that!—when the morning light first disclosed to them this new supply of food (τὸ μὰν: *nam man secundum nostram loquutionem interrogationis particula ist, cum quid sit rei percontamur*, in connection with Ex. xvi. 15, "And when the children of

1 Von Raumer, *Zug der Israeliten*, Leips. 1837, p. 26.

Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was"). This explanation has been followed by later writers, and has become incorporated with the legends of the monks of Sinai.[1] This name "man" is still general among the Beduins; a word which, however, Lengerke has rendered "gift."

That in the middle ages Bernhard von Breydenbach, and other observers down to the present time, including Morison (quoted on a former page), have had no doubt about the identity of the manna now found and that which was supplied to Israel, may be explained by supposing that God wished to perpetuate in the eyes of men the knowledge of His wonderful dealings of old, and to preserve an unfailing reminder of that mercy which "gave them bread from heaven to eat." But I cannot coincide at all with the comment which has been passed by Robinson and others, that there is no resemblance between the characteristics ascribed to the manna of the Israelites in Ex. xvi. 31 and Num. xi. 8, 9, and those of the manna now gathered; for the words, Ex. xvi. 14, "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost, on the ground," are exactly applicable to the manna of to-day. And so, too, the words in Num. xi. 9, "And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it," are justified by the daily experience of the desert: for the Hebrew camp was not in the most savage parts of the wilderness, but in those places where water and pasturage and tamarisk trees were found.

And so far as concerns Ex. xvi. 31, "And it was like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey," there is no broad discrepancy from experience; for though when on the ground it seems to be yellowish, or, according to Ehrenberg, reddish, yet Morison speaks of it as being as white as snow. And as to the honey-like taste, it is a perfectly well-known fact that it is eaten like honey on bread by the Arabs, and considered a great delicacy.

[1] See Bonar's *Desert of Sinai* for some sharp critical comments on Josephus' account, p. 153. The whole passage is well worth reading, as on the whole the most exhaustive statement which has appeared on the supernatural side.—ED.

And regarding what we read in Ex. xvi. 20, that when it had been kept too long, worms bred in the manna, the account is by no means so incredible, when it is taken into account that the insect which produces it is often caught up with the sticky mass, and that the children of Israel were not familiar with the method of clarification now employed by the Arabs, who boil the manna and strain it through a coarse cloth, and are thus enabled to keep it for a long time. And with reference to Num. xi. 8, the beating in a mortar and the grinding it in mills, all depends upon the manner in which mills and mortars were used in those times, and whether it was not possible in them to convert to a powder a substance which, when it is cold, is not like rock, but merely of a wax-like hardness.

In view of the full account which the Mosaic record has given us of the nature and appearance of the manna, the objections which I have noticed sink into unimportance, and I do not hesitate to say that there is a close similarity between the manna of the present time and that described in the Pentateuch: the name, the honey-like taste, the colour, the appearance simultaneously with the dew, the formation in the night-time, the size of the drops, the falling to the ground, the gathering it up from the earth, the growing hard in the cool morning and the melting when the sun is risen, the account of the insects in it, and their putrefaction when kept a little while, the gathering it day by day, as in Ex. xvi. 21,—all this is exactly accordant with present experience.[1] Even the very

[1] No recent writer has controverted these positions more strongly than Rev. Dr Bonar, in his otherwise admirable book, *The Desert of Sinai*. But Dr Bonar has not taken into account the entirely different *animus* which is displayed by one class of opponents from that displayed by another class. There are rationalists who try to place the whole matter on a purely natural basis, and having substantiated the fact that the ancient and the modern manna were the same, stop there, and assume that it merely supplemented at certain places and at certain times the other food of the Israelites; and there are those Christian believers, among whom Ritter is to be classed, who merely make the human basis apparent on which God created a miraculous superstructure, — as, for example, when Jesus enlarged the loaves and fishes to equal the wants of five thousand men. This view is of course equally reverent and equally tenable; it is that which Dr Robinson applies to the manner in which natural and supernatural agencies combined to effect the opening of the Red Sea, and to suffer its passage; and it is to be regretted that Dr Bonar has allowed himself to attack Dr

place and time where and when the manna first appeared, so fully harmonize with the language of Scripture as to silence the cavils of sceptics. Even Carl von Raumer, who holds that the ancient manna was entirely different from the modern, is compelled to admit that the substance which now bears that name is found in precisely the localities where it was first displayed to the Israelites. For in the opening verse of Ex. xvi. we read that this food was provided after they had taken "their journey from Elim" ("where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees," Ex. xv. 27), and had come "unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt." This seems to correspond to the Wadi Taibe, the most northern point, according to Seetzen, where manna is found; and the time after the passage of the Red Sea coincides accurately with the season when it is

Robinson on that ground, to cavil at Stanley, when the meaning of the latter is perfectly plain and open, and to controvert the statements made regarding the properties of manna. And I say this with the more freedom, since his work is marked elsewhere with his usual beautiful spirit, his careful research, and that fine genius which creates a garden for the fancy even out of the sands of the desert.

The view taken by Ritter of course admits Dr Bonar's opening objections (*Desert of Sinai*, pp. 146, 147), that "the tarfa exudes only small quantities of what is called manna. The Arabs could not subsist on it for a week:" "the tarfa only exudes at certain seasons; when we passed [Jan.] there were no exudations:" "the tarfa does not yield its exudations regularly, even once a year; it sometimes omits four or five years;"—for the view advocated by Ritter admits all this, and allows a direct divine interposition to make good the great deficiency. What little appears is only made the basis of the immense supply that was needed. The view does not detract one whit from the greatness of God's power and mercy; it even exalts it, by allowing us who live in these latter days not only to look upon the kind of food which actually fed the people of God in their wanderings, but also to notice how bare and scanty was the supply out of which God created such a rich and lasting abundance. Dr Bonar's fourth objection has already been alluded to in the text: that the exudations of the tarfa fall from the tree, while the manna fell from heaven. It will be remembered that the Arabs still speak in their picturesque language, so like the Hebrew in its structure, of the "manna raining from heaven." And touching the fifth objection, "the tarfa exudations are quite unfit for grinding, or pounding, or baking, or boiling:" that it can be boiled we know from the present Arab practice; but we cannot infer, because the clarified and crystallized manna sold at the convent cannot be ground, that the gum

first observed in the Wadi Feiran. Hengstenberg calls special attention to this fact, that not only is manna still found in the Peninsula, but that it is still collected at just the time and in just the places where it began to be the food of the children of Israel; in other words, that the text of the imposing sermon which Jehovah preached to the children of Israel regarding His power and goodness, is still to be seen among the tamarisk groves of Sinai. The objections which have risen, not out of the nature of the manna, but out of the accompanying circumstances, have been thoroughly disposed of in the suitable place, and by competent authorities,[1] and I have only to allude to them briefly in passing.

According to the ordinary acceptation, the manna (in addition to the flocks of quails which flew over) formed the entire food of the Israelites during their forty years in the wilderness, and came without any intermissions, and in uniform amounts. Von Raumer asserts that it is the language of the Bible that

when taken in the morning fresh from the ground could not. Cooking often effects a change like that. And regarding its taste, we cannot speak too confidently. An Arab not familiar with sugar could not say that it tastes "like brown sugar mixed with water;" neither could the Hebrew lawgiver, who had but a limited list of sweets with which to compare it. And it is evident that only those who have tasted it when fresh can judge of its real flavour. Nor is Dr Bonar's seventh objection derived from the clarified manna bought of the monks valid, that it has no tendency to putrefy: the absence of animal remains is enough to explain that. And is the quotation of Ex. xvi. 21 quite fair, substituting the word evaporated for melted? The verse as it stands is exactly confirmed to-day, as Ritter abundantly shows. The ninth objection brings us back to the ground taken in the first. It has no relation to the question whether the present manna is the same with the ancient. Creative power could as easily double the supply for the Sabbath, as it could create a new and unique thing. In the tenth objection, Dr Bonar expresses himself rather more strongly than the facts justify. The manna is slightly purgative, but not so much so as to warrant his sarcastic remark. And regarding the eleventh objection, Ritter has showed that the ancient manna *was* a thing quite unknown to the Israelites. The manniferous tarfa is not an Egyptian tree. But not to dwell longer on the matter, it is plain that the points of view held by such writers as Lepsius, who treats the whole story with ill-disguised contempt, as if an eastern fancy, and that of the Christian Ritter, who grants fully the interference of a miraculous hand to enlarge an exiguous and uncertain supply into a grand and perennial abundance, are radically different, and should never be confounded.—ED.

[1] Hengstenberg, *Pentateuch*, Pt. i. pp. 280-290.

the rain of manna occurred every day with the exception of the Sabbaths, and that every day just an omer was collected for each person; a statement which he finds irreconcilable with the fact mentioned by travellers, that the gum of the tamarisk only falls for two months of the year in any abundance, and for eight months is entirely wanting. But Hengstenberg has called attention to one or two important philological points in which von Raumer was in error. The words "every day" do not occur in the text. It only says in Ex. xvi. 35, that "the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited;" but it by no means excludes interruptions, and we have a distinct allusion to the fact that none fell on the Sabbath, confirmed by the going out of some doubting ones to look, and finding nothing. The statement that an omer was provided for each person, is only made with relation to what fell at first; the amount afterwards is not mentioned, and there is no reason to doubt that it was adapted to the needs and demands of the Israelites. And the sarcasm which von Raumer has cast upon Ehrenberg's discoveries is unjustified: there is no reason for his scornful remark, that "Ehrenberg would have us believe that the children of Israel walked under a grove of tamarisk, covered with bugs and dropping sweetness all the way from Mount Sinai to Edrei." For although we may admit that there has been a great reduction in the number not only of the tarfa trees of the Holy Land, but of all trees, yet there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the Israelites depended upon them for food after they had passed the Jordan, gone up to Edrei, and come back again to Jericho.

The common interpretation, says Hengstenberg, makes nonsense of the whole manna passage of Scripture, for it rests only upon hypothesis, and treats the whole manifestation of manna now with ridicule, — as if a supply of six or seven hundred pounds could possibly meet the wants of millions, scattered too over a broad tract, or as if any one supposed that it could. But Hengstenberg's luminous mind has thrown much light upon the subject, and his acumen opened a way to a better prospect. He has proved that the manna was not found in Canaan, and has made it highly probable that it was not met

[1] Comp. Lengerke, *Kenaan*, i. p. 446.

at all beyond the Peninsula: the passage in Ex. xvi. 35 does not, according to him, indicate the crossing of the Jordan; and the last distinct allusion to the manna (Num. xxi. 4, 5), "our soul loatheth this light bread," relates to a time when the Israelites were still upon the Peninsula, west of the mountains of Edom. And that this "bread from heaven" was not the only food of the Hebrews, as some have asserted, with a desire to magnify the miracle, is plain from the allusions to their eating the fruit of the date palm; from the evident sustenance which their flocks and herds found; from the existence of other nations—the Amalekites, Midianites, Ishmaelites, for example—who must have been provided for by natural means from the abundant supplies enjoyed by the cattle around Sinai (Ex. xii. 38, xvii. 3), where some herbs must have been found suitable for man; and from the express command recorded in Deut. ii. 6, "Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat."

I agree therefore completely with the distinguished commentator on the Pentateuch, who thus closes his *Excursus on the Misunderstandings which have arisen regarding the Manna*: "Although all the auxiliaries which the desert affords be taken into account, yet, with its soil and with its climate, the whole supply of food must, under the most favourable circumstances, be very small, and utterly inadequate to the continual wants of a large body of people, not living in the most fertile region, but obliged to cross extensive tracts of land entirely barren. There they must have been miraculously supplied by God, or they would surely have perished. And the fact that this miraculous help only supplemented the supplies of nature, does not at all diminish our wonder; it only increases it, making what is extraordinary the more apparent, inasmuch as it rests upon such a slender base of ordinary supply." And is not this calculated to make us look deeper than most of our pragmatical historians have done, into the silent and unobtrusive workings of God's power, over the *whole* field of history, and see that elsewhere than on the scenes of what we fondly call sacred story, His providence is preparing stores of good of which we little think, and which come to us in channels of which we little dream?

It remains to speak of the diffusion of manna over other

parts of the world; for although it is manifest to the reader, from the opening remarks on this subject, that the manniferous tamarisk is exclusively confined to the central part of the Sinaitic Peninsula, *i.e.* that only there is that manna found which was eaten by the children of Israel, yet elsewhere the word manna is used, and words are current signifying bread from heaven, honey-dew, honey-sugar, and the like. These are applied to sweet, nutritive exudations of a kindred nature, and which are found throughout most of the tropical and subtropical regions of the Orient and the Occident.[1]

DISCURSION II.

THE MOUNTAIN GROUP OF SERBAL, WITH ITS FIVE PEAKS—THE ASCENT OF BURCKHARDT IN 1816, OF RUPPELL IN 1831, AND OF LEPSIUS IN 1845.

We have already followed the course of Burckhardt down the Wadi el Sheikh, to the confluence of the Wadi Rimm or Rymm and the Wadi Szolaf, where, at the narrow gorge of Buêb, or the Gate, we have the natural link between those two celebrated channels, which, though called by different names, yet constitute so striking a feature of the region. His method

[1] I have translated the whole of this note up to this place: further it is not needful to go. The remainder treats exhaustively of the subject indicated in the closing paragraph. As it is of little interest to the biblical reader, I will content myself with stating, that the original German passage is found in Ritter's *Erdkunde*, Pt. xiv. pp. 685–695. It will be well, however, to extract the references at the foot of these ten pages; the more so, as some are accessible English works. I may say that Ritter has examined the whole literature of the subject, and begins with the sweet exudations known to the ancients.—ED.

The following are Ritter's references:—

Athenæus, *Deipnos.* ed. Schweighauser, iv. p. 358; Faber, Gruner, Dierbach, Sprengel, W. Ainslie; Rosenmüller, *Handbuch der bibl. Altherthumskunde*, Pt. iv. 1, pp. 316–329; Edw. Frederick, *Remarks on the Substance called Ghez or Manna*, in *Transac. of the Bombay Soc.* 4, T. i. pp. 251–258; J. Rich, *Narrative of Koordistan*, vol. i. p. 142; C. Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien*, pp. 145, 146 [there is an Eng. translation]; Ker Porter, *Voy.* Lond. 1821, vol. ii. p. 471; J. Brant, *Notes of a Journ.* 1838, in *Journ. of the Geog. Soc. of London*, vol. x. P. iii. p. 352; Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria;* Dr Karl Koch, *Wanderungen in Oriente*, 1843 and 1844, Weimar 1846, Pt. ii. p. 407; B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Voy. to Khorasan*, Lond. 1826, Ap. B. p. 96; S. G. Gmelin, *Reise in Persien*, 1770–1772,

of seizing the main points of a landscape is so striking, and he brings the whole scene so vividly before us, that from his account I will gather his results, bring them together, and lay them before my reader.

Passing down the Wadi el Sheikh, he saw upon the projecting rocks of the mountain several small huts, which Hamd, his guide, told him were the work of infidels in ancient times: they were probably the cells of the hermits of Sinai. The stones, although uncemented, were carefully put together, and have thus resisted the force of the torrents. Upon the summits of three different mountains to the right, he saw small ruined towers, originally perhaps chapels, dependent on the episcopal see of Feiran. In descending the valley, the mountains on both sides approached so near, that a defile of only fifteen or twenty feet across was left: beyond this they diverged again. At the end of four hours he entered the plantations of the Wadi Feiran.

Determining to ascend Mount Serbal, he endeavoured to find a guide, but he found it very difficult. The Arabs suspected him to be searching for lost treasures; and when at last one Jebalije promised to go, the price which he demanded was so exorbitant, that Burckhardt determined to rely on himself

St Petersb. 1774, Pt. iii. p. 288; Olivier, *Voy. en Syrie, etc.*, 1804, T. ii. p. 359, iii. p. 188; Dr A. Russell, *Natural History of Aleppo;* Chardin, *Voy.* iii. p. 279; Macdon. Kinneir, *Memoir of Persia*, p. 339; Rawlinson, *Notes on Kuristan*, in *Jour. of the Roy. Geog. Soc. of London*, T. ix. P. i. p. 104; Wellsted's *Travels;* Wm. Ouseley, *Voy.* 1819, vol. i. Ap. p. 452; W. Ainslie, *Materia Indica*, ed. London 1826, vol. i. pp. 209–211—*Manna Persica;* Sultan Babur, *Memoirs*, ed. Erskine, p. 7, Note 3; Fothergill, in *Philosoph. Transactions*, xliii. p. 47; Major-General Thomas Hardwick, *Descrip. of a Substance called Gez or Manna, etc.*, in *Asiatic Res.* Calcutta 1822, T. xiv. p. 183; Lord Stokes (Commander), *Discoveries in Australia, etc., Explored and Surveyed during the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*, 1837–43, London 1846, vol. i. p. 285; *Athenæum*, June 27, 1846, No. 974, p. 659; *Athenæum*, July 31, 1847, No. 1031, p. 816; Dr S. Reisseck, *Ueber die Natur der kürzlich in Kleinasien vom Himmel gefallenen Manna*, in W. Haidinger, *Berichte und Mittheil. von Freunden der Naturwissensch. in Wien*, 1847, vol. i. pp. 195–201; E. Evorsmann, *Reise von Orenburg nach Buchara*, Berlin 1823, pp. 25, 29, and Lichtenstein, *Not.* p. 116; Gorski, *Ueber eine* 1846 *um Wilna gefunden meteorische Manna*, in *Berliner Naturf. Freunde*, Sitzung von 15 Juni 1847; C. A. Meyer, *Bericht über die sogenannte Manna von Sawel*, in *Bullet. physico-mathém. de l'Acad. de St Petersbourg*, 1847, tom. vi. No. 15, pp. 257–239.

alone, and find his own way to the top. This he regretted afterwards, for the climbing was exceedingly difficult; but it was then too late, and he had to go forward. Taking Hamd and another of his own party, he took food for two days, retraced his steps over the Wadi el Sheikh for three-quarters of an hour, and then turned to the right, up a narrow valley called Wadi Ertama, in the higher part of which he found a few dates growing. On the other side of this ascent he fell in with the Wadi Rymm or Rimm, and found there the ruins of a small village, the houses built of hewn stone, and in a very solid manner.

Passing the night near there, he started the next morning to ascend the mountain, very soon regretting the absence of a guide. The rocks were sharp: there was no path till he came to the almost perpendicular side of the upper Serbal, which he ascended in a narrow difficult cleft. It took four hours to climb up the lower summit of the mountain, and he arrived completely exhausted. Here was a small plain, with some trees, and the ruins of a small stone reservoir for water. On several blocks of granite were inscriptions, mostly illegible: two of them he copied. After resting a little he ascended the eastern peak, which was at his left hand, and reached its top in three-quarters of an hour, after great exertions; for the rock is so small and slippery, as well as steep, that, though barefooted, he was obliged to crawl along, in order to avoid being hurled below; and had he not met a few shrubs to which he could cling, he would probably have had to abandon the attempt. He found the summit of the eastern peak to consist of one enormous mass of granite, the smoothness of which is broken only by a few partial fissures, presenting an appearance not unlike the ice-covered peaks of the Alps. Near the top he found steps regularly formed with large loose stones, which must have been brought from below, and so judiciously arranged along the declivity, that they have resisted the devastations of time, and may still serve for ascending. He was afterwards told, that these steps are the continuation of a regular path from the bottom of the mountain, and which in several parts is cut through the rock with great labour. Had he had a guide, he would have ascended by this road, which runs along the southern and eastern side of Serbal. He found that the mountain has

five peaks: the two highest are the one to the east, which he ascended, and another immediately west of it: these rise like cones, and are distinguishable from a great distance.

Although the eastern peak looks from below as sharp as a needle, yet Burckhardt found on its summit a platform fifty paces in circumference. Just below the top he found on every granite block that presented a smooth surface, inscriptions, the far greater part of which were illegible. The fact of so many being found upon the rocks near the summit of this mountain, and also in the valley which leads from its base to Feiran, together with the existence of the road leading up to the peak, seemed to him to afford strong reasons for presuming that the Serbal was an ancient place of devotion; and Burckhardt expresses his conviction that it was at one period the chief place of pilgrimage in the Peninsula: that it was then considered the mountain where Moses received the tables of the law, although he himself does not waver in his belief that Mount Sinai or Mount St Catherine is the real Horeb.

From the summit of Serbal Burckhardt took the bearings of the most prominent objects in view, which the chartographer will find recorded in his account.

He experienced great difficulty in descending. If he had had a plentiful supply of water, and had known the road, he would have gone down by the steps; but as he was scantily supplied with water, he was afraid to trust to the chances of finding a spring. He was obliged, therefore, to creep and crawl down, and reached the lower platform of Serbal about noon. At a point two hours and a half later he left the path which he had taken in the morning, turned more to the west, and by a less rapid descent he reached the Wadi Aleyat, which leads to the lower parts of the Wadi Feiran. After another hour he came to a less rocky district.

Stopping some time to rest among some date trees, and at a spring of excellent water at the foot of Serbal, in the evening he took his march westward through the valley Aleyat. On his right was a mountain, upon the top of which he saw the tomb of a sheikh, held in great veneration by the Beduins, who frequently visit it, and sacrifice sheep there. It is called el-Monodja [according to Gesenius, the "place of prayer"]. The custom of the Beduins, of burying their saints upon the

summits of mountains, accords with a similar practice of the Israelites; and there are very few tribes among them who have not one or more tombs of protecting saints, in whose honour they offer sacrifices.

In many parts of the valley Aleyat Burckhardt found small buildings standing, ten or twelve feet square, and five feet high, with very narrow entrances, and though built of loose stone, still so well put together, that the greater part of them were yet entire, notwithstanding the annual rains. They were all quite empty. They were entirely unlike any that he saw elsewhere in the Peninsula, when those are excepted which he had passed in the upper part of the Wadi Feiran.

In the course of his descent through the Wadi Aleyat, he found numerous inscriptions on blocks by the side of the road, some of which were still clear enough to be copied. The transcript may be found in his volume. On many stones were drawings of goats and camels. This he concluded to have once been the main road to the top of Serbal, continuing along its base, turning by Deir-Sigillye round its eastern side, and passing the cleft and the road by which he had ascended, which nowhere bore traces of ever having been a regular and frequented route.

Even prior to Burckhardt's visit in 1816, Seetzen had called attention to Mount Serbal, on the occasion of his return to Suez, at the time of his first visit to Sinai in 1810. He purposed to make its ascent, and also to explore Wadi Feiran; but the unwillingness of his guides to allow him to leave the regular travelled path baffled him, as it had already done with regard to his purpose of going from Sinai to Akaba. He saw,[1] however, the inscriptions in the Wadi Aleyat, and was told that on the other side of the mountain there is a good path to the summit. He was told also, that on the top there were ruins, and gardens now run wild; but later explorers have failed to see them. These reports led him naturally to the conviction that Serbal was once as renowned and as much visited as Sinai; yet he was not enabled to learn more particularly regarding that and other points of interest. Laborde[2] is also of this

[1] Seetzen, MS. account; also Com. from Mocha in *Mon. Corresp.* 1813, xxvii. p. 69.

[2] L. de Laborde, *Voy. de l'Arabie Petrée*, p. 68.

opinion, although he did not take pains to inform himself regarding its topographical details.

The next European who ascended Serbal was the indefatigable Ruppell, who, after visiting Wadi Feiran twice before,[1] in 1817 and in 1826, made a third visit from Tor, expressly for the purpose of going to the summit, and who not only did so, but took his barometer with him, and ascertained its height.[2]

On the morning of the 10th of May 1831 he left his camp in the Wadi Sheikh, ascended the Wadi Rymm, approaching Serbal on the east side, and falling in with a company of Aleyat Arabs who were stationed there. One of them undertook to guide him to the summit for half a Spanish dollar, an arrangement which Ruppell thought most fortunate. The road lay for an hour and a half through rough massive rocks, and was very hard to climb. The material was a black, crystalline hornblende, and seemed to be the result of former volcanic activity. He then passed from the eastern to the northern slope of the mountain, and followed a cleft in the rocky mass, in which a flesh-coloured porphyritic feldspar, mixed with hyacinth-blue, glittering, glass-like quartz crystals, prevails. No regular stratification was to be seen, but everywhere the sharp rugged pinnacles towered up, between which there was a vigorous growth of wild fig trees and caper plants.

Looking up, he could now distinguish the five great peaks of Serbal, and could see that the second one, reckoning from the west, was the highest. This one accordingly he determined to ascend. On his way he passed a little level spot where there was a spring of water. At that point he saw traces of leopards, the prints made by the claws being five inches broad. Their prey in this wild country is the steinbocks and goats, which they devour to the great loss of the poor shepherds. Traces of leopards and panthers have been found in other parts of the Peninsula. Burckhardt received as a present from the superior of the convent a leopard skin—the pelt, doubtless, of some one

[1] E. Ruppell, *Schreiben an v. Hammer*, Livorno 1817, in *Fundgraben des Orients*, Pt. v. p. 442; also Ruppell, *Reisen in Nubien und dem Peträischen Arabien*, 1829, p. 261.

[2] E. Ruppell, *Reise in Abyssinien, etc.*, 1838; *Excursion in Peträischen Arabien*, pp. 125–129.

taken in the region; and Russegger tells us that at the time of his visit these beasts were shot in the neighbourhood of Om Shomar.

It took but half an hour to ascend from the spring to the summit of the highest peak, on which Ruppell discovered many inscriptions similar in their general appearance to those seen at Sinai. He also discovered a circular arrangement of stones on the summit, and also a number of steps to aid the ascent. These he attributed to the Beduins. On the summit his guide drew his sandals from his feet, as if the place was hallowed; and he told Ruppell that he had twice visited the spot before, and had offered two sheep there—once on the occasion of the birth of a son, and again after his recovery from sickness. This seemed to point back to the time when this place had a sanctity even in heathen eyes; and that it was considered holy by Christians has some confirmation in the ruins of the great convent which once stood on the south-west side, and in the fragments of hermitages which lie scattered around. The wild ruggedness of Serbal, and its isolated position, remarks Ruppell, make it much more imposing and striking than any other mountain of the Peninsula, and may have been the reason why in ancient times it was marked out as the object of a pilgrimage. The highest point Ruppell found to be 6342 Paris feet above the sea. It does not therefore by any means overtop Sinai, or the most lofty eminences of the Sinai group, but lies from 1500 to 2000 feet lower. Yet its bold front and its isolated grandeur misled even Burckhardt, who thought it higher than Mount St Catherine. From the summit Ruppell could descry the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea, and could look down the Peninsula as far as Ras Mohammed. He descended to Wadi Rimm in two hours and a half, and declared that this adventure, with the thirst which he suffered, and the glare of the sun, was the most formidable of his life.

The high degree of interest which seemed to attach itself to Serbal as the object of early pilgrimages, prompted Lepsius—who, in opposition to all tradition, held that Serbal and not Sinai was the scene of the giving of the law—to make a careful examination of the whole neighbourhood, and study the antiquities of the place, and their relation to the scriptural narra-

tive. He commenced his ascent[1] on the 27th of March 1845. He was forced to go round the south-eastern extremity of the mountain, and ascend behind from the south, as the access up the Rimm ravine would have been impossible. A quarter of an hour above his encampment he came to a spring, shaded by nebek, hamada, and palm trees, whose fresh pure water was walled round to the depth of several feet. He then climbed over a small rib of the mountain, on which there stood several ancient stone houses, down into another branch of the Rimm valley, and in an hour and a half reached the south-eastern angle of the mountain. From this point he pursued a paved road of rock, which was even sometimes supported by mason work. This led to an artificial terrace and a wall—the remains, as it appeared, of a house that had been destroyed—and to a cool spring shaded by tall reeds, a palm tree, and several jassur bushes. The whole mountain is here overgrown with habak and other sweet-smelling herbs. Some minutes farther on he came to several caves in the rock, which once served as hermits' cells; and after wandering for almost four hours, he reached a small plateau spreading out between the summits, where again he found a house with two rooms. A road led over this level ground to the edge of the western side of the mountain, which sinks at first steep and rugged, then in more gently inclined wide ribs to the sandy plain of el-Ge'ah, and disclosed across the sea a glorious prospect of the opposite coast, and the Egyptian chain of mountains bounding it. From

[1] From Lepsius' manuscript journal; compare Erbkam, *Specialkarte der Kloster und Stadt-Ruinen von Faran in Palmengrunde am Fuss des Serbal, in März aufgenommen* 1845, von R. Lepsius. [Since Ritter made the above reference, Lepsius' account has not only been published in Germany, but translated into English. See Mackenzie's translation (London, Bentley, pub.); also Bohn's Antiq. Lib.—Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai.* See also Lepsius' *Tour from Thebes to the Peninsula of Sinai*, translated into English by C. H. Cottrell. In the Brit. Mus. Lib. (consult name Lepsius in Cat.) and at the Royal Geographical Society's Rooms in London can be seen Erbkam's map, referred to by Ritter, of Serbal and its neighbourhood, constructed from Lepsius' materials; this is reduced unaltered in Bohn's Lepsius, and made much more distinct than the original. It is admirably adapted to illustrate this whole volume, besides being uncommonly open and clear; generalizing the features happily, and at the same time retaining much more detail than Stanley has done in his maps of the Peninsula.—ED.]

this point the rock-path suddenly descended along the rugged mountain declivity into a wild deep basin, round which the five summits of Serbal meet in a semicircle, forming a mighty crown. In the middle of this basin are the ruins of an old convent, to which the mountain path leads, but which he had not time to visit. He therefore returned across the level space, and then began to ascend the most southern of the summits of Serbal. When he had almost got to the top of the height, he thought that he observed that the second summit was somewhat higher, and therefore hastened down again and sought out a way to reach it. He at length succeeded in clambering up from the north-east side. Here, to his astonishment, between the two points into which the summit is divided, he found a small level valley, plentifully supplied with shrubs and herbs; and from this he first ascended the one, then the other point, and by the assistance of his guide, who was conversant with the spot, he took the points of the compass with reference to all the places of note which might be here surveyed in the wide horizon. He clearly saw how much Sinai rose above the highest peak of Serbal, and how pre-eminently Om Shomar towers above all the other mountains of the Peninsula. He did not take the circuitous road down by which he had ascended, but leaped down like a chamois from block to block, taking an almost direct course to the Wadi Rimm; and in two hours and a half he reached his tent, confirming Ruppell's testimony, that it was the most difficult and fatiguing tour of his life.

I have quoted Lepsius' account with this degree of fulness, because it affords such a strong confirmation of a fact which is almost universal, that the more closely we look into the most deserted and solitary, and one would think uninhabitable parts of our globe, the primeval forests of America, the Sahara waste, and the wild solitudes of Arabia Petræa, we find the footprints of man, and see that there is no region so inhospitable but he finds in it a shelter and a home. Our sense of the word uninhabitable is purely relative therefore, and falls into disuse the more closely we study the habits of our race.[1]

[1] More recent accounts of the ascent of Serbal may be found in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, who with a competent guide ascended with great ease; also in Dr Stewart's picturesque and by no means superficial work, *The Tent and the Khan*. Dr Stewart leans to the opinion that Serbal was

DISCURSION III.

THE WADI FEIRAN, WITH ITS ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS, AND THOSE IN THE WADI ALEIAT.

I have already traced the course of the Wadi el Sheikh down to the defile known to the Arabs as el-Bueb, or the Gate, which forms the north-east entrance into the Wadi Feiran. We can now go on from that place, and follow Lepsius in his course out from the Rimm Wadi before we try to become familiar with the topography of that remarkable valley. The most full and graphic map of the region is that given by Laborde.[1] He gives the entire length of the wadi from el-Bueb to the entrance of Wadi Mokkateb as twelve hours.

Leaving his camp in the Wadi Rimm at an early hour, he came in the course of an hour to the junction of the Wadi Selaf and the Wadi el Sheikh, where again he saw, on the left, the remains of some stone houses. The valley is here broad, and ill adapted to inscriptions; yet there were some on one block of granite which lies on the right, directly at the opening of the Wadi el Sheikh. Only five minutes' walk farther, and he came to a grove of tarfa trees, always indicating a moist soil, and which extends as far as el-Bueb, the point where the valley begins to bear the name Feiran. He reached el-Bueb in an hour and a half after leaving his encampment. Lepsius noticed there large masses of earth deposits, in some cases eighty and a hundred feet high, lying in the hollow of the valley, and with their yellow colour forming a very striking contrast to the blood-red porphyry which in many places spans the wadi. He supposed that once the valley was closed in here, and that the waters rushing down from all sides, and even from Jebel Musa, united in forming a lake. To this cause he

the scene of the giving of the law, and asserts that the Wadi Aleiat at its base is amply large enough to accommodate the entire host of Israel. From that valley every peak of Serbal he thinks to be visible. He fully confirms the accounts of Burckhardt, Ruppell, and Lepsius regarding the difficulty of ascent.—ED.

[1] *Vue et plan des ruines de Ouadi Feiran*, and *Relevé topographique du Ouadi Feiran*, in Laborde's *Voy. de l'Arabie Petrée*, pp. 68, 69. [See also his *Commentaire sur l'Exode*, p. 85.—ED.]

ascribes the formation of this remarkable deposit of earth, and supposes that the position of Feiran as the lowest point of a large mountainous district occasions the unusual supply of water that issues forth at this point. A quarter of an hour westward from el-Bueb the gorge called el-Ahedar plunges away to the north, and a little farther on towards the west the Wadi Um Rattame (Burckhardt's Ertama) appears, leading across to the Wadi Rimm, and so to the north peaks of the east side of Serbal.

The stratified deposits which Ruppell observed at the eastern extremity of the valley, one hundred feet in thickness, everywhere homogeneous, lying horizontally, and coming into juxtaposition with the upright masses of syenite and porphyry, continue on through the western portion of the Wadi Feiran, or rather its north-westerly portion. In the valley is found a dense growth of tarfa trees; at the side of this grove, and on the north, is the mountain wall of Méedik, on the south Hardhe. A half-hour farther on, at the Wadi el Nachele, or the Ras el Nachele, *i.e.* the Mounts of Palms, contiguous to the Jebel Hardhe and Menega (both northern spurs of Serbal), the Wadi Feiran turns sharply from the north-west to the south-west, and even to the south, till it is stopped by high banks of clay. Here the richest vegetation is to be found: the tamarisks diffuse the most delightful perfume; and where they are not found, date palms take their place. Very soon the springs are seen, which in a short time form a clear singing brook, transforming the wilderness of the desert into a paradise. Here begin the palm plantations, the groves of sittere and nebek, and the fruit-trees. The traveller wanders through a rich and fertile park, and the place bears the name "el-Gennain," *i.e.* the Gardens.

Along the brook there is found a fine thrifty growth of sedge (*chabba*): the black soil is moist, and is beautified by the presence of moss and grass; blue flowerets, resembling the European forget-me-not, peep up here and there; swallows are seen flying, and singing birds are heard in the trees; among them there has been observed a blackish grey nightingale, perhaps the *turdus melanocepalus*, like the one seen in Aila with long tail feathers. Tischendorf speaks of having seen flocks of beautiful mottled starlings. The soil is largely com-

posed of alluvium, and is so rich as to nourish tarfa trees of uncommon size, some of them two and a half and three feet in diameter, and greatly in contrast with those which are seen elsewhere. There is also a very fine growth of palms, which receive abundant moisture from the brook, whose bed is never dry, and whose waters are sometimes so abundant as to send their surplus even to the sea. On the precipitous rocks which hem in the Wadi Feiran, as in the neighbouring smaller wadis, may be seen the habitations of men; goats and sheep are to be observed under the trees, and children playing in the brook. An hour's distance from el-Bueb, west of the sharp south-westerly curve of the fruitful tamarisk grove, there is seen on the cliffs at the right, at a place called Hererat, an ancient ruin, partly built of stone, partly out of tiles, the only one of the kind in the country, and apparently the remains of an ancient convent, surrounded by walls and stone houses, which evidently date back to a time when a Christian settlement was here; for such structures have never been erected by Beduins. It is these ancient ruins which are even now associated with fields of wheat and tobacco and vineyards. The little village is now deserted; the wild Arabs do not choose such houses for their dwellings, but prefer to live in rude huts made of wooden poles and covered with matting and boughs, and not standing out conspicuously like those of the early Christian inhabitants of Wadi Feiran, but retreating behind the hillocks near by and in the minor wadis. The rocks which stand out in front are too much scarred and broken to be suitable for inscriptions. Below these ragged walls of rock, and near the ruined convent, there are the remains of walls built of mingled stone and lime, but in one place they have fallen in and made a great pile of rubbish at least fifteen paces in diameter. From this point the view falls directly into the short cleft called Wadi Debbe, on the east side of Jebel Debbe: it broadens, however, as one goes westward, and is covered with a beautiful carpet of palm tufts, among which some trees and hedgerows appear. This growth continues still westward, reaching its termination at the ruins of the ancient city of Faran, where the Wadi Feiran and the Wadi Aleiat have their junction. The Hererat has not been carefully described by any traveller excepting Lepsius.[1]

[1] Lepsius, manuscript account, 1845.

The Wadi Feiran becomes broader at its junction with the Aleiat, through which runs the Seil el Aleiat, *i.e.* the brook or river bed of the Aleiat, indicating the channel of torrents which still come in the rainy seasons, dashing down the northern slope of Serbal. In the middle of this bed or channel may be seen a hillock plainly made up of mountain *detritus*, and bearing upon its top, which may be a hundred feet from the level of the valley, the ruins of an ancient convent, Hererate el Kebir, *i.e.* the greater Hererat. At the left, at the foot of this hillock—that is, on its eastern side—Lepsius saw the shattered fragments, the pillars and capitals of an ancient church, hewn out of a very tractable sandstone, but not retaining at present many traces of their original form. North of the hillock, and at the base of the steep walls of the wadi, the distinguished Egyptologist discovered the ruins of the ancient city of Faran or Pharan, mentioned in the second century by Claudius Ptolemæus, by Nilus, Cosmos, and Antoninus Martyr in the third and fourth centuries, and stated by Macrizi to be a place of ruins in the fifteenth. It was once the residence of a Christian bishop, and it must have been a complete Christian city before the convent at Sinai was built, which took place early in the sixth century. About a hundred of the stone houses of this ancient city are still used by the Arabs, who live in little wooden huts around, as storehouses for their fruits and other valuables. But Lepsius says that it took not long to discover that this city was built on the site and with the materials of another. In most of the houses, though the main part of the material was granite, there were sandstone blocks, architraves, and columns of the ruined church and convent buildings. They are very distinguishable from the far older tomb-like but carefully constructed stone houses which are still to be found on the neighbouring mountains and in the Wadi Aleiat hard by, and which unquestionably belong to a Christian epoch, while this city in its present state is evidently the work of purely Arabian hands. It is unquestionably this place which Macrizi refers to as a city of Amalek, and near which, in the mountains close by, there was a multitude of caves filled with skeletons, which had come down from the time when Christians occupied the place. At present no bones are to be found there.

The main channel of the brook runs northward towards the

plain and the site of the old city, where stand the huts now inhabited. A second branch of the stream bends southward, and runs towards the middle of the hillock on which the ruined convent stands; it there courses around the hill, and on its north side joins the other branch. From this point it pursues a meandering way, yet in a general north-westerly direction, watering here and there patches of fruitful soil covered with palm trees, but at last disappears in a cleft in the rocks, and is seen no more.

Only to this place does the fertility of the Wadi Feiran extend: west of the hillock on which the Feiran convent lies in ruins, the general poverty of the soil begins: no more palms are to be seen, and only here and there a tamarisk and a low growth of brush find sufficient nourishment. It is possible that the brook of the Wadi Aleiat has at the time of its freshets washed away all the good earth through the Wadi Feiran to the sea; yet in ordinary times the brook runs quietly enough, distributing its much needed gifts to the palm trees by its side, until it comes to its abrupt termination alluded to above.

The true Wadi Feiran is of very moderate breadth, but is of considerable length from east to west, as two and a half hours are required to pass from el-Bueb, the eastern barrier, to the convent-crowned hillock of Hererat at the west. Its northern and southern limits are steep mountain walls. Within this space there is everywhere that thick deposit of yellowish clay, rich in marl, of which I have already spoken; a soil peculiarly characteristic, and whose like is only found in the Wadi el Sheikh. Unquestionably it is the soil which is the main source of the great fertility of the Wadi Feiran, and not the water which flows through it, although the latter is a prominent auxiliary, and is not to be overlooked in accounting for the paradisaical abundance of vegetation. The brook which irrigates the Wadi Feiran is one of the very few perennial streams of the Peninsula, of which Ruppell found but three others—those in Wadis Hebran, Salaka, and Ain; and it is just as valuable in assisting the growth of vegetation as all brooks are which break their way through masses of rock, and wind through narrow defiles till they disappear in the sand, or those which filter down from pool to pool, distributing a regularly graduated amount of moisture to the gardens which depend upon them,

as in the gardens of Sinai. But the main part of the fertility of Feiran cannot be ascribed to this source, but lies in the very constitution of the soil itself, which appears to have once been the basin of a lake, filling the whole of what is now the fruitful and beautiful wadi. This is Lepsius' opinion, and it rests upon a high degree of probability. The great body of water entering through el-Bueb once filled the whole of the basin, being shut in on the north and south by the steep walls of rock, and on the west by the hillock Hererat, on which the ruined convent stands. At length the mass became so deep as to burst its way through westward to the sea, leaving when the waters had flowed away the basin which is now called the Wadi Feiran, and giving it that rich and deep soil which makes it the gem of the whole Peninsula. Should future geological research confirm this opinion, it would at once explain the great difference between its geognostical character and that of all the other Sinaitic wadis, although still that formation would be seen to be anterior to all human history. The records of man have nothing to show regarding this point: the place where the history of our race first comes into contact with the Wadi Feiran is at the time when its inhabitants were the rude Amalekites who contended for its possession with the children of Israel.

Although I have been able to follow thus closely the minute and exceedingly accurate account[1] given by my honoured and kind friend, yet I cannot forbear, before accompanying him to the Wadi Aleiat and its inscriptions, adding such particulars from earlier travellers as shall complete the whole subject, and round out the full measure of its details.

From Niebuhr we learn that, deceived by his guide, he saw but a small part of the Wadi Feiran, but what he did see confirms in all respects the accounts already quoted. He tells us that his guide, the Beduin sheikh, lived in this valley, where he had two wives, the one of whom occupied herself with the tents and the household affairs, while the other tended the date plantations some way off. The sheikh himself gained

[1] Ritter quotes from the manuscript of Lepsius, not then published. I find, on consulting the two English translations afterwards made, that the material which Ritter had before him was more ample than Lepsius' printed German copy contained; and the reader who wishes to have the full account of the Wadi Feiran has it in the above translation from Ritter.—Ed.

his support, not by the tillage of that beautiful place, but by transporting persons and goods to and from Suez. The wife who remained in charge of the tents complained to Niebuhr that she very seldom saw her husband; for he was away in Egypt nearly all of the time,—an instructive passage, which throws much light on the occupations of the Arabs of the wadi, and on the habits of most of the Beduins of the Peninsula.

Ruppell in his visit to this region did not pay much attention[1] to the Wadi Feiran; but in noticing the ruins found at the western extremity, he hastily set them down as ancient forts or rude strongholds put up there to guard the position, and as such they seemed to him little likely to repay much examination. He was struck, however, at finding some astronomical characters, lilies, and crosses, graven on some of the stones, and set the time of erecting the structure as early as the fifth century. He speaks particularly of finding a brick cistern which he thought might once have been used as a bath. At his second visit he ascertained the latitude of the place, which he found to be 28° 41′ 45″ N., and says that the Arabs called it by the name el-Mohezet. At that time he remarked on the south-west wall of the valley some tomb-like excavations made in the Egyptian style, but destitute of hieroglyphical inscriptions.

Burckhardt has given us his usual clear description of the Wadi Feiran, which he declares without reserve to be the most beautiful place in the whole Peninsula. One may walk for two hours, he says, and pass a continual succession of date palms and gardens, all of them well watered with springs, which bubble up amid them. It is very singular that Burckhardt makes no allusion to a perennial brook in the vale: he speaks only of springs, although he cites a passage from Macrizi which alludes to a brook being found there; and he must have been familiar with the torrents which in winter sometimes break in from the Wadi el Sheikh, and pour themselves south of the birket Faroun into the Gulf of Suez. Seetzen, too, speaks only of a spring which runs as far as a man will walk in ten minutes, and is then lost in the sand. Under the palm trees, Burckhardt tells us that the huts of the Jebalije Arabs were

[1] E. Ruppell, *Schreiben*, Livorno 1817, in *Fundgraben des Orients*, vol. v. p. 432 et seq.

standing, who live there, and whose duty it is to till the soil for the real owners, the Towara tribes, particularly the Szowabha, and whose pay consists in one-third of the gross products. Yet their occupation is far from being profitable; for at the time of the date harvest the vale is full of Arabs, who come to enjoy it, and who must all be welcome as guests, and enjoy to the full all the good things of the place, even though their poor hosts go without. For the date is not the only fruit which is found there. The nebek comes to perfection, and when ground to a powder and mixed with butter milk, it is a favourite article of food with the Arabs. Cucumbers, melons, onions, and the egg plant, do well there; tobacco grows with great luxuriance, and is much used for smoking; hemp succeeds also, and is used for the same purpose; but apples, pears, and apricots are not found in this fertile vale, and do better in the cooler climate of Sinai. And yet, despite the renowned fruitfulness of the Wadi Feiran, Burckhardt says further, that the soil is so rocky that it would be impossible to gather a harvest of corn there, equal to the wants of the smallest Arab tribe. Barley and wheat hardly return the seed which is sown. Schimper confirms this statement, and says that the whole amount of products of the Wadi Feiran is so slight, that the herds of goats have to supply a great portion of the food of the Arab inhabitants, and that these are driven perforce to the wandering life they lead, in conducting caravans and the like. Yet to do this they must have a large number of camels, and they must wander over a broad grazing ground, extending many a day's journey from the Wadi Feiran.

In consequence of the narrowness of the vale—for Burckhardt estimated it to be but a hundred paces wide—and by reason of the steepness of the walls on the north and the south, the heat is generally very oppressive during the warm months; and as the water is not remarkably good, it is not a situation favourable to health. The Jebalije Arabs who live there are not so robust as the Beduins, and in summer aré much subject to fevers. They do not remain therefore in the lowest part of the wadi when the weather is hottest, but withdraw to the adjacent heights, leaving only as many as are needed to attend to the tents and the gardens.

At the western extremity of the date plantations Burckhardt

says that he saw the ruins of the ancient city of Faran, lying on both sides of the wadi, which there has a breadth of about a quarter of an hour. The houses, he says, are built entirely out of stone; some are cemented, but the greater part are without it. He sets their number as high as two hundred. On the north wall of the vale he saw no traces of former buildings, but on the south side he discovered a broad structure, whose lower portions were of stone, and whose higher portions were of brick: this is probably the building which Lepsius supposes to have been a church. At the base of the southern mountain wall he noticed the remains of a small aqueduct, and saw towers upon a number of the neighbouring hills.

Three-quarters of an hour farther down the valley, Burckhardt noticed several small grottos in the rock, hewn out very roughly, without any regularity, and without any symmetry. The greater part of them seemed to owe their commencement to nature, and their later form to the hand of man. Some of the largest, found next to the destroyed city, probably served as dwellings; others were evidently tombs; but few of them were capacious enough to receive more than three corpses, and were not over three or four feet high. In no one of them were to be found traces of antiquities.

A half-hour's walk from the last palm trees of the Wadi Feiran, Burckhardt discovered at the right, on the path by the mountain wall, the ruins of a little city or village; the previous portion of the valley was, however, entirely free from any traces of man. The houses here were better built than in the other city; they were made of well-laid stones, were two storeys in height, and every one had five large square windows in front: the roof in all had fallen in. There, too, he found traces of tombs, as in the place mentioned just above. Burckhardt counted more than a hundred of these deserted, ruined houses. This place seems to be the same as that which Ruppell supposed to be the remains of ancient strongholds, as well as that which Lepsius thought to be a convent. No other travellers have, however, alluded so markedly to any two-storeyed building at that place; others speak only in a general way of ruins. It were to be wished that, full as are the accounts given both by Burckhardt and by Lepsius, a still greater degree of minuteness might yet be attained re-

garding these ruins. But these eminent travellers both agree in supposing the large two-storeyed edifice to be the remains of a convent which we know to have been in Feiran, from documents which Burckhardt examined in the library at Sinai, not to speak of the allusion made to a Christian establishment in the Wadi Feiran by Claud. Ptolemæus, in the very dawn of the Christian era.

I have in another place alluded to the bishopric of Faran, and to the ancient title found still in historic records—Ed. Theonas, *Dei miseratione Presbyter et Legatus sancti Montis Sinai et eremi Rhaithu ac sanctissimæ ecclesiæ de Pharan;* but of a convent there we have no distinct account, excepting the one already mentioned, found by Burckhardt among the manuscripts of the library at Mount Sinai. And, at the same time, the character of the age forbids our entertaining any doubt about the possibility of there having been such an establishment there, but on the contrary renders it very probable; and it was the opinion of Le Quieu[1] that an earlier seat of the bishop of Faran had, after falling into ruin, been transferred to the Convent of Mount Sinai, and that the superior had afterwards received ordination as bishop,—an honour which did not fall naturally to the head of a convent. For it is certain from that "Theonas" document already referred to, written in the year 536, that such a change had taken place; and the probable union of two convents makes it more intelligible why Photius, who wrote before the middle of the sixth century, spoke of himself as *Præsul Ecclesiæ Pharan vel Montis Sinai,* and why with the gradually growing importance and prestige of Sinai the name of Pharan should become less hallowed and attractive, and at last should pass quite into obscurity. And it is very probable that the contest of the bishop with the victorious Byzantine church was very influential in securing the entire overthrow of the establishment of the Ecclesia Faran; for in the seventh century we find Theodorus Episcopus Pharan mentioned as the chief representative and leading advocate of a heretical party in the dogmatic Monothelitic strifes.[2] He was proscribed in the Lateran

[1] Mich. de Quieu, *Oriens Christianus*, Op. posth. T. iii. 1740, fol. 750, etc.

[2] Neander, *Allgemeine Gesch. der Christlichen Rel. und Kirche*, vol. iii. 1834, pp. 364-394.

Council held at Rome in 649, and at the Œcumenical Council held at Constantinople in 680, and his teachings put under the ban. After him there appears no name of an Episcopus Ecclesiæ Pharan. There is, then, from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries no history of a Christian Pharan; and it is to be regretted that the only document relating to the subject has been only cursorily examined by Burckhardt. The graves of the present Arab inhabitants of the Wadi Feiran indicate that they have only within recent times come into possession of the place. Their dead they bury, not in the Wadi Feiran, but beyond all the ruins, in the valley containing the shrine of their sheikh Abu Taleb. The numerous skeletons of which Macrizi makes especial mention, as deposited in the caves on both sides of the Wadi Feiran, are, in view of all the facts of the case, probably no Mohammedan remains, but those of former Christian possessors of the place. This is confirmed, too, by what the Arabs told Lepsius, that in some of the caves are still to be seen the bones of Nazarenes, *i.e.* of Christians.

It now remains to enter into a more detailed description of the Wadi Aleiat, the chief branch towards the south of the Wadi Feiran, and leading to the northern base of Serbal. We have already, in Burckhardt's company, glanced at it, and have noticed Lepsius' repeated references to it. It will richly repay a more careful study.

It lies between Mount Debbe on the east and Mount Maa on the west, and beginning at its divergence from the Wadi Feiran, where the ruins of the ancient city of Faran lie, it continues its course first southwardly, then to the south-east, always tolerably broad, and is in length from the junction with Feiran and the base of Serbal a two hours' walk. Up to the place where the wadi bends, and where a spring is found, there is a large number of inscriptions, ruins, and tombs; and after that, the glory of the Lord's work begins more and more conspicuously to appear. The Wadi Aleiat is called el-Derb Serbal, or the road to Serbal, and its name is exactly conformable to the fact; for as the traveller advances through it, the mountain rises in unbroken sublimity before him, all of its five peaks being clearly visible, and there being not even a hillock in the way. When the sun is shining upon the mountain, the sharp pinnacles glow with an almost unearthly splendour, and the mountain

seems a flame. Seen from the Wadi Aleiat, Serbal is decidedly the most imposing eminence of the whole Peninsula. The road prolonged would lead to the summit of one of the loftiest pinnacles of the mountain, but which has never been ascended.

Lepsius, who is of the opinion that the law was given at Serbal, thinks that Moses must have ascended the mountain at this place, and that a barrier was put up at its base, lest the people who lived in the stone houses whose ruins are now standing should go up and touch the mount. The valley is full of sejal (acacia) and nebek: at the left, where there are the most ruins, there are the most inscriptions: no block has fallen or been broken there for thousands of years; and the inscriptions seem to be preserved by lying for the most part in the dry bed of the stream, which is rarely filled with water. The inscriptions and ruins seem to be of equal antiquity.

The place where the ruins are found in the Wadi Aleiat is called Sich el Udhar, and is removed some distance from the junction with the Wadi Feiran. The houses which are there are houses only generically: they consist each merely of a low stone cell, about eight feet long and two wide, and capable of being covered with a flat stone, which spans the entire breadth. These stones are very roughly hewn, and are laid on without any special nicety. As the cells or houses are not high enough for a person to stand in, they might be taken, some of them at least, for tombs, if we found bones, or the least traces of interments. Nor are there inscriptions upon their walls; and the little huts seem to have been constructed with a view to providing a cool place to sit, or to serve as a mere encampment. Farther on in the valley they become larger; yet their object still remains exceedingly uncertain, though there they are evidently too large for tombs. Lepsius took sketches of some of them. One of these houses had two contiguous chambers, one of which was entirely closed, and had to be reached from above. Removing the stones which covered it, he found it to be entirely empty, and it was evident that it had never been disturbed before.

These rude houses continued to be found up the wadi to the bend which disclosed the five-pinnacled Serbal, where they cease, although traces of them may be discovered still farther.

The inscriptions, which are extremely numerous, lie in the lower valley, near the brook, along the Derb Serbal, and are also traced in the upper valley, above the spring. They are not very deeply cut in the hard granite; but the difference of colour between them and the unwritten rock is very marked. The inscriptions are precisely similar in character to those of the Wadi Mokkateb, and need no special description in this place.

NOTE.—*Serbal as a Mount of Heathen Worship, and the Encampment of Rephidim at its Base.*

Great as have been the advances in topographical and antiquarian research within the past few years, they have not been sufficient upon the Sinaitic Peninsula to guide us to decisive results regarding its relation to the events recorded in the Mosaic records, or to entitle us to speak dogmatically upon them. Still the rapid progress which has been made within the past ten years in this direction allows us to suppose, that although we are now in the very infancy of this department of knowledge, our course will be sufficiently marked in the time to come, so that at some future period many of our doubts will be cleared up, and some degree of certainty gained. At present, rich in suggestion and in the deepest moral interest as are the highways and byways of the Peninsula, our knowledge of them is most desultory and imperfect. And if we speak of places, the case is not much better. The whole field is now obscure to us: we know about a few places, and the thoroughfares which connect them; and while we are continually hearing about them over and over from every latest traveller, none, or very few, break fresh ground, and tell us of the cross roads and the out-of-the-way places: these all lie in their old solitude and desolation. But till this kind of travelling is changed, we can have no correct map, indeed no map approximating to correctness; and so long as scientific expeditions persist in dashing through a land so rich in interest as this, lingering at places of great importance sometimes merely for hours, and rarely for more than a few days, we shall only accumulate hypotheses instead of certified results, and our darkness will be all the while growing doubly black: we shall not be gaining certainty even regarding the

present character of the country, not to speak of its sublime past, and that hoary antiquity whose testimonies are to be seen in the myriad inscriptions which remain, but no one of which has ever been read, even by those who speak most confidently about the past history of this sacred land. And to speak with any assurance regarding such a matter as whether Serbal or Sinai was the mount which witnessed the giving of the law, requires that many a *hiatus* in our present knowledge be filled, and many a doubtful place identified.

Very much remains to be done before we can assert that we are familiar with the country south of Sinai; and, coming back to the Serbal, we have to confess that only one of its summits has as yet been ascended, and that the one lying farthest back and most removed every way from the approach through the Derb Serbal or Wadi Aleyat—the great towering pinnacle which looks down into that most important valley—remains yet unexplored and undescribed. Indeed, no one has even yet explored the Derb Serbal up to its very end, studied the formation of the mountains which lie around its yet unknown beginning, or traced the course of the other wadis which break through that wild region. Lepsius made a noble commencement; but the work remains where he left it. All that lies outside of the beaten path of the Beduins has been ignored; and up to this time we have no detailed description of the ancient and garden-girded Convents of Deir Barabra, Deir Sikelje (Sigillye), el-Feireïa, and Deir Antus. And so far as concerns the route taken by the children of Israel, we are able to indicate with a feeling of certainty but two or three stations, and trace them to Serbal or to Sinai; but after the time when they received the law, their course is to us *terra incognita*. And how little do we know of the relation of the journey of Israel to the cotemporaneous Egyptian works at Sarbat el Chadem!

Had I ever visited this land, I doubt not that I should have been compelled, by the majesty of its scenery present before the eye, to come to the same decided convictions which most travellers have expressed; but it has never been my lot to view the country of which I am writing. Yet at a distance it may be possible better to command the whole field, and weigh the reports which have been brought back by those who have themselves explored the land. It will be my aim here, as everywhere

else, in default of reaching certainty, to attain to the highest measure of probability, and to apply that rule with all fidelity to the great historical events which have made the Sinai Peninsula conspicuous. And we gain an impressive lesson in this whole review, from the fact that, when the children of Israel had been conducted over their tortuous path to the banks of the Jordan, and when they could view it historically, and look back upon the steps of that generation which had died in the wilderness, we do not find that the course which they had taken was prominent in their thoughts. God had led them in such a way, and through such a country, that they had almost no associations with it which were dear, and which they wished to cherish: the leading of God was the great fact which stood out most prominently in their thought—of that God who did not wish that they should follow Him back into the desert, but ever onward to the sacred hill of Zion. And therefore it is, that even the very mount itself where the law was given became, not indistinct in the Hebrew's religion, but neglected in his travels. He did not value the place; he did not make pilgrimages to it; and he seemed to care as little as most have done, until the question was so recently taken up and argued, whether it were Serbal or Sinai that witnessed the momentous scene. It was enough for him that both were grand enough for such an event, both worthy of becoming a resting-place for the glory of Jehovah. But to us the question is a more interesting one, it would seem, than to the Hebrews themselves; and as we have already examined some of the grounds which have led able minds to accept Sinai as the scene of law-giving, we will now examine the view taken by others, especially the learned and eloquent Lepsius, that Serbal was the mount which God honoured with His presence.

The indifference which has been felt during the few last centuries towards Serbal, is in the most marked contrast with the profound reverence with which it was regarded in earlier times, and I may even say in the earliest times, of which those very ancient memorials which stand there are a clear ringing echo, which has not yet died away from among those mountain heights, and which has been sounding down, not through centuries alone, but through thousands of years. To what epoch do those memorials belong? Are they Mosaic, Christian,

Mohammedan? Are they haply still more ancient—the traces of a primeval occupation of the valleys of Serbal by a heathen population,—by Amalekites, Midianites, or even Philistines? There are not wanting some proofs of even this, carefully adduced by Hitzig.[1]

Upon the Philistine territory, which extended from the Pelusian mouth of the Nile eastward, passing the Lake Serbonis, and extending to Rhinococura and Gaza, and which therefore formed the north-western border of the Sinai Peninsula, was the ancient home of the Philistim and Caphtorim (Gen. x. 14), two tribes which became in the course of time so powerful as to be the most formidable enemy that Israel was likely to meet in passing from Egypt to Canaan, as we learn from Ex. xiii. 17;[2] so formidable indeed, that it seemed best that the Hebrews should avoid them, and take a very circuitous course, lest, meeting enemies so powerful, they should be discouraged, and wish to go back again to Egypt. Among these Philistim and Caphtorim a kind of heathen worship was in vogue, very similar in its general characteristics to the polytheistic systems of Eastern Asia, and especially akin to that of India, although there was not strict accordance in the names applied to the gods. Still in this respect even, the primitive Sanscrit etymology was to be traced; and even more distinctly was to be discerned the idea of incarnation, which lies at the basis of the Indian mythology. The learned Hitzig has traced this out in the Philistine idol-name *Marnas*, in which he recognises the well-known Sanscrit name *Voruna*, *Urania*, probably indicating the Indian *Dûrga;* and her husband Siva's (*Çiva*) name, which in Sanscrit is also often called *Çarva*, *Çarava* (from *çara*, arrow), and which in the feminine form is written *Çaravani*, is found in the name *Serbonis* (*Lacus Serbonis*), around which like worship was paid to him. *Çarvar* is the masculine form, and the *r* being readily changed to *l*, we have the root, and almost the word *Serbal*. This name, *Çarval* or *Serbal*, is the name of a god, who was conceived of as incarnate, and who received homage as a mountain-god (as Siva was among the Himalaya, or the *deus Carmelus* of Mount Carmel,

[1] F. Hitzig, *Urgeschichte und Mythologie der Philistaer*, Leipsig 1845, pp. 254–263.

[2] Von Lengerke, *Kenaan*, i. p. 196.

according to Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 78, and Sueton. in *Vespas.* c. 5), and whose seat was proclaimed to be the majestic peak in the south that bears his name up to the present day. The name *Çarva* or *Çarvar*, or the arrow-shaped, has its fit exponent in the sharp pinnacles which, like the barbs of arrows, give a peculiar aspect to the crown of Serbal.

The name Serbal, then, whose first syllable does not, according to our present knowledge, admit of any other etymological derivation and interpretation, can be accepted as the designation of a mountain set apart for worship, if we can substantiate the fact that the Philistine territory extended so far southward as to admit of the possibility of religious rites being paid there.

And here, although history has given us nothing positive, yet, says Hitzig, there are not wanting some proofs that the domain of the Philistines not only extended along the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai Peninsula, but that in the times of Abraham and Abimelech it extended some distance inland (Gen. xx. 2, xxi. 32, xxvi. 8); and we have indications in profane history also, that they had stations along the coast of the Red Sea and on the Arabian Gulf (Nonnus, *Dionys.* xxi. 304, xxxvi. 420, xxxix. 8), where they became very numerous, and built and manned the ships which Dionysius used in his Indian expedition. To such a people the lofty peak of Serbal would not be a stranger, towering above the chief emporia of their trade, and bearing itself, in the language of Lord Lindsay, like a king enthroned, above the mass of lowly hills at its base. And from what we know of the efforts made to gain the most favoured spots on the Peninsula (see 2 Kings xvi. 6), we may infer that the possession of Serbal, with its beautiful oasis of Feiran, would have been a cherished one by a people whose journeys from Gerar and Beersheba to Tor would often have taken them past it. It is most natural to conceive that that lofty object—the point which marked the real beginning of their way when they went northward, and the real ending of it when they went southward, and which was not used, it is probable, as a place where they might stop, as the Israelites did, and pasture their cattle, but merely salute it as it were in passing—became a sacred spot, and that the god whose home they supposed it to be claimed of them a thankoffering for a journey

satisfactorily ended, or an offering of propitiation for a journey hopefully begun.

It is hardly possible that a worship so ancient should leave no tradition of itself; and it is probable that the account of it was transmitted down through the Hebrew, Christian, and Mohammedan possession of the country to the present time, the last vestiges being what is incorporated in the language of the Beduins and their few acts of worship. And could we arrive at an interpretation of the many inscriptions which are found in its neighbourhood, we should probably not only gain much knowledge of the ancient worship paid here, but also of the meaning and nature of the mysterious characters of Serabit el Chadim, on the great highway from Serbal northward to Egypt and Philistia. It is true that the latter inscriptions may be ascribed to the Nabathæans, who unquestionably often traversed this road, and who followed in the order of time the Philistines in gaining possession of the maritime ports of the Peninsula; but it must be remembered that they were only followers. The Philistines had first used this great thoroughfare; and as the majority of the inscriptions are found on the north side, or that nearest to Philistia, they have a claim to the first consideration. Among these very numerous inscriptions towards the north, one of the most conspicuous is the cross, often alluded to by travellers, and supposed by many to indicate a Christian origin and meaning. But the double form (†), which it often has, does not give it the true character of the cross, according to Hitzig,[1] but rather that of the phallus, which was the later symbol of Siva, *i.e.* of Serbal. But should Hitzig's hypothesis be too bold, an ancient worship which once was paid in the plain, on the south side of the Serbal group, at the "field altar with an unknown inscription" (see *Erdkunde*, xiii. 773–75), could still be referred to Baal, who may have been a god similar in nature and kindred in origin to those of India.

It cannot be urged as an objection against the earlier Philistine worship on Serbal, as the holy mountain of Siva, that at the time of the exodus of the children of Israel no Philistines were found in that neighbourhood, and that in the Bible there are no indications of any Philistines being expected there. It

[1] Hitzig, p. 268.

is very true that Moses had his conflict near Serbal with the Amalekites, and not with the Philistines (Ex. xvii. 8). He met them at Rephidim, whither Israel had advanced after leaving the wilderness of Sin (Ex. xvii. 1). These sons of Amalek were a horde of Arab tribes inhabiting the north-west portion of the Peninsula,[1] and not mentioned among the list given in Gen. x. Their power seems, however, to have become so formidable at the period of the exodus, as to have driven back the Philistines to the coast, and made them the masters of the country as far north as Rephidim. And it is very probable that, having gained possession of the Serbal district, they too had their idolatrous worship of Baal upon the noble mountain.

Even in times antecedent to the exodus from Egypt, and before the mount of the law was looked upon by the descendants of Abraham, there was a mountain in the Peninsula which Israel esteemed holy, and called the Mount of God: for Moses, while still tending his father-in-law's sheep in Midian, "led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb" (Ex. iii. 1). This is the first time that this expression is used in Scripture, and the first time also that the word Horeb appears. But it is fully in accordance with the next allusion to the mount of God (Ex. iii. 12): "This shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." We have again an indication of the same hallowed spot in the command given to Moses (Ex. iii. 18), to make a three days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the Lord God. And yet again in Ex. v. 3: Moses and Aaron beg permission of the Egyptian king "to go three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God." There seems to have been some special stress laid upon the three days' journey. But for any large number of people to have gone in so short a time from Egypt to the present Mount Sinai, would have been impossible. And when at last the grievous plagues had compelled Pharaoh to consent that the sacrifices should be made to the God of the Hebrews, he desires that it should be done in his own country,—a proposition which Moses waives,

[1] Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, i. p. 296. etc.: von Lengerke, *Kenaan*, pp. 200-207.

by the plea that the animals which he should offer were such as are esteemed holy by the Egyptians, and that it would give great offence were they killed and offered as a sacrifice in their presence. Then Pharaoh gives his reluctant consent that they take the three days' journey (Ex. viii. 27, 28). But the story is not ended there. A new hardening of his heart takes place, new plagues overwhelm his land, to which at last he yielded, suffering the herds as well as people to leave the country.

But after this point, which involves not the mission of Moses and a company of priests, but of a whole nation, we hear nothing more about the sacrifices which are to follow a three days' journey. Indeed, so slow was the progress of the great multitude, that the first three days only carried them past the wilderness of Shur, and to the springs of Marah. Later still they came to Elim, with its twelve wells and its seventy palm trees, to Dophkah and Alush, and after that to Rephidim (Num. xxxiii. 12–14). It was the fifteenth day of the second month by the time that they had advanced to the place where the fall of manna commenced.

Travellers in our day are accustomed to take three days, after leaving the wells of Moses, opposite to Suez, to go as far as the opening of Wadi Mokkateb, and to reach Wadi Feiran in four days. And yet we know from the experience of some who have been compelled to hasten, that without much extraordinary burden for the camels, the journey may be considerably abridged. It is extremely probable, therefore, that Serbal came at once to Pharaoh's mind in connection with the "three days' journey into the desert," and the sacrifice to be offered there: the more so as Siva was the only Indian deity to whom animal sacrifices could be brought.[1] Sinai, which could in no way be reached in three days, is out of the question. And there is the greater probability that Serbal was understood by the Egyptian monarch, from the fact that the foundries near that mountain, which were ancient even in Moses' day, were worked at that time; and it could hardly have failed to come to his knowledge, that near his own mines and smelting furnaces there was a lofty peak, which had long been considered sacred, and had been a favourite resort of pilgrims. The request of Moses and Aaron could not surprise him; and he

[1] Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, 1847, vol. i. p. 782.

seems to have yielded, not readily, but without suspicion, to their request. It was only when he heard of the departure of the whole people, with their herds and flocks, that his suspicions were thoroughly aroused, and his heart hardened against the most fearful afflictions of God.

Thus far, however shaky the ground may be under our feet, we have at least firm footing enough to enable us to stand; but beyond this our position is more insecure. When we come to the question, whether this ancient mountain of God —which only appears once in the earliest passage which speaks of it in connection with the name Horeb, and about which we have no further account relating to the offering of sacrifice upon it—was identical with the mountain later called Horeb and Sinai, we are more uncertain about the answer,—an answer to which the eminent Lepsius says no, for reasons which seem to him of great weight. It is true he flies in the very face of the certainly not modern traditions of the Sinaitic convent, and of some topographical peculiarities which seem to harmonize with those traditions. But this is not decisively destructive to his position, for the existence of a convent at Serbal older than that at Sinai is certain: we have unfortunately lost the traditions of the Feiran valley, because its former Christian population has passed away; that is all: the fact that there must have been ancient traditions of the sanctity of the place, is indicated sufficiently by the ruins. In lack, then, of direct testimony, Lepsius is compelled to turn to the collateral proofs of history, and to the unchangeable characteristics of the place, for the best available light. These have been all carefully collated and displayed by this learned investigator.

In the first place, the very geography of the district, which has nothing to vouch for it but the comparatively recent traditions of the convent, seemed to Lepsius to be entirely in antagonism to the facts as they are narrated in the only historical chronicle which we have of them—the Mosaic record.[1] And here let it be remembered, the steep, bare mountain-forms, with their gorge-like passes, and the few springs, too scanty to afford the means of a long encampment, do not give us much opportunity for mere conjecture: they hem us within the bounds of a very contracted range.

[1] Lepsius, *Reise von Theben, etc.*; Eng. translation, *Tour from Thebes.*

And yet they do not so clearly point out the way that the Israelites must have taken that all commentators have been forced to agree in their conclusions: on the contrary, there have been the greatest differences, and that, too, among men who have sedulously avoided giving way to conjecture. For although the main direction taken by the Hebrews is clear, and can give opportunity to but slight discussion, yet the time when they arrived at or when they left any given locality is far more difficult to ascertain. And the question, moreover, whether the physical character of the country has not materially changed since the time of the exodus, is also an apposite one; and we cannot answer all possible questions regarding the route of the Israelites till we are assured that the Peninsula is substantially to-day what it was three thousand years ago.

In regard to distances, as concerns the inquiry whether the real Sinai were the north-westerly or the south-easterly locality, —that is, whether it were Serbal or the so-called Sinai of the monks of the convent,—Robinson and Lepsius are far from being in accord. Yet they both agree in what the former long since established, that necessarily Rephidim and Horeb, where Moses drew water from the rock, were near each other, and that they were only removed one day's journey from the true mount of the law-giving.

According to Robinson's convictions, the wilderness of Sin is the northern part of the plain el-Kaa, and begins south of Marah and Elim, near Wadi Murkhab, three days' journey north of Tor. He thinks that this is the region referred to in Ex. xvi. 1, "And they took their journey from Elim; and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt." And still more clearly, Num. xxxiii. 12-15: "And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. And they removed from Alush, and they encamped in Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai." This distance, which indicates the moves of four days, is usually passed in from twenty-six to twenty-eight hours, at the ordinary pace of camels. The way

through the Wadi Feiran and the Wadi el Sheikh would, according to Robinson, take the traveller, at the end of his third day's march, only a half-hour's distance south-west of the spring Abu Suweirah, which is but a half-day's journey, or three hours' distance, at most, from the convent. In its immediate neighbourhood, therefore, Robinson, and with him others, Laborde and von Raumer, hold that Rephidim is to be located, —the last halting-place of the Israelites before reaching the mountain now bearing the name of Sinai. The misplacing of the rock called Massah and Meribah, out of which, when struck by Moses, water issued, is no obstacle to the view of Robinson, who saw that the so-called rock is only a granite fragment, which has fallen more or less recently from the side of the mountain. But the coincidence of Rephidim with the Abu Suweirah is confirmed only by the spring now found there, viewing it as the lasting token of the miracle wrought for Israel by the hand of Moses. For if this was the real location of Rephidim, the first day's march of the Israelites northward after leaving Sinai, to Kibroth-hattaavah, or the Graves of Lust, must have taken them through Rephidim again, which is not mentioned in the Bible. And besides, the last of the four days' journey appears to be too short, being only about half the time occupied during the three previous days, in which six or seven hours were employed, which, on the other hand, is too great to have been taken by a whole nation travelling with flocks and herds. I think, in view of this, that Robinson and those who agree with him have set their Rephidim too far eastward, and incline to the belief that it is to be looked for in the lower portion of the Wadi el Sheikh, perhaps in the neighbourhood of the tamarisk grove; and this is collaterally supported by the connection found in the Scripture between Rephidim and the falling of manna. For this the Abu Suweirah lies too high—4000 feet—and probably all that portion of the Wadi el Sheikh.

Lepsius, who supposes the mountain of the law to be Serbal, supposes the days' journeys from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim to have been much shorter,—a supposition which is confirmed by the magnitude of the Israelitish host in comparison with the little caravans which now pass through the land. We should take into account, too, the fact that the Israelites had

no camels, that animal not being raised at that time in Egypt; and the herds of the Hebrews could by no means have advanced as rapidly as the striding camels which now convoy the travellers of the Peninsula. Yet Robinson ingeniously avoids this difficulty, by supposing that Moses and the leaders of the people went before the rest, travelling with more rapidity than they, and allowed the great body of the nation to take different routes, to linger by the way, and to turn out of the main paths to find water and pasturage for their flocks and herds.

If the first day's march brought the Israelites from Elim (Abu Zelime, according to Lepsius) through the wilderness of Sin to the opening of Wadi Sittere, and if Dophkah and Alush conducted them on to the outlying mountains of the Wadi Feiran and the present Sikke Tekruri, *i.e.* Place of Pilgrimage, there would have been no pleasant water along the whole of the way; and at the end of the third day's march, each being six hours long, according to our mode of reckoning the distances of the desert, they would have reached el-Hussue, and the clear rippling brook of Wadi Feiran, and have received the most striking testimony (this is Lepsius' theory) of the sure providence of God, and the certainty that all their wants were anticipated. This place, which is but a half-hour's distance from the ruined convent of Feiran, Lepsius accordingly fixes upon as the site of the scriptural Rephidim; and the beautiful vale beyond, the gem of the Peninsula, was in his view the prize contended for by the Israelites and the Amalekites, the former being victorious, and by their victory coming into the undisputed possession of the Wadi Feiran.

As we find it at present, the brook of Wadi Feiran is the natural result of the confluence of the waters which issue from the Wadi el Sheikh and the neighbouring valleys; and if the present order of things existed in the time of the exodus, the staff of Moses simply enlarged in a manner adequate to the wants of a great number, what it found already existing, but in an imperfect supply. Still it is difficult to account for the fact that the children of Israel complained so bitterly as they did of the want of water, after they had advanced but a single day's journey beyond the miraculous source which had so amply met their wants, and for a season silenced their com-

plaints. But should the blow of Moses' staff have had a different effect, should it have fallen at the other extremity of Wadi Feiran, and caused the breaking through of the passage now known as el-Bueb, the whole scene of Rephidim would be changed: the Wadi Feiran would not have been the fertile vale which it now is; and the Wadi el Sheikh must have been the prized possession of the sons of Amalek, perhaps far more abundantly supplied with verdure than now, and not relinquished by its possessors without a fierce struggle.

In confirmation of the view that the fourth day's march brought the Israelites only to the foot of Serbal, *i.e.* Sinai according to Lepsius, is the statement made by Cosmas about the year 540, respecting the identity of Rephidim and Pharan, "which is hard by Serbal." Of weight, too, is Jerome's statement, that Pharan and Horeb touched each other (*Onomastic. s. v. Horeb:* "Mons Dei in regione Madian juxta montem Sina supra Arabiam in deserto: cui jungitur mons et desertum Saracenorum quod vocatur Pharan:" and *sub v. Sinai:* "Mons in deserto Arabiæ Petræa quod est ad totius Judæa, a quo et tota circumjacens regio deserta Desertum Sinai in Scriptura appellatur"). His Desertum Pharan, however, cannot possibly indicate the situation of the city of Faran in the fruitful Wadi Feiran, but must have meant that more northerly Pharan to which repeated reference is made by the early writers. The latter Pharan he sometimes speaks of as Oppidum Faran (*Onom. sub v. Faran*), through which Israel passed *after* leaving Sinai (*per hoc fecerunt filii Israel, cum de monte Sina castra movissent*). This brings it into connection with that desert of Pharan near Siddim and the "Salt Sea," Gen. xiv. 6, where Chedorlaomer routed his enemies.

We can see, however, even in these allusions of Cosmas and Jerome, the beginning of the diverging opinions regarding the localities still under discussion, and to the settlement of which no investigator has yet brought such an array of evidence as seems to be final and unanswerable. And it is plain, that in the present state of our topographical knowledge of the Peninsula, and with the widely different interpretations of the Scripture passages relating to Rephidim and Sinai, we are far from a solution of our difficulties. They may never be solved: the methods of approaching the subject may

always be more or less hypothetical: that we do not know. But in the present state of our knowledge, I may be permitted to add my own hypothesis.

Rephidim seems to me to have been neither at the place now called el-Hessué, nor at the Abu Suweirah: not at the latter, for the reasons referred to above; not at the former, on account of the great improbability that water should issue from the ground at just the point where the brook now passes into its cavernal receptacle, natural as is the theory that the pure water of Wadi Feiran is that which supplied the people in their distress. And the issuing of a spring from the earth, at the touch of Moses' staff, would be called miraculous, if it occurred in a wild desert region, where no signs of water appeared to the careless eye, but which may have been marked by one who had had Moses' long desert training, accustomed to track streams of water even through subterranean channels, and strike down to them, and bring their supplies to the surface.

If this view is correct, the Wadi Feiran is indebted to the times subsequent to Moses' visit for its fertility: it was not a possession which the Amalekites would especially value; and the convent and city, whose ruins are met in the most fruitful part of the vale, were built there for other reasons than to perpetuate the associations once connected with the Hebrew altar reared to Jehovah-nissi (Ex. xvii. 15), and meant to keep in perpetual recollection the victory which Joshua gained over the Amalekites. Jethro's visit, according to this view, was made while Moses occupied the lower portion of Wadi el Sheikh, or Rephidim,—the spot where the tamarisk trees were probably even then very abundant, and where the approach to Serbal was direct and easy.

From the account contained in Ex. xviii. we learn, that at the time of Jethro's visit Moses had not advanced beyond the battle-field where the Amalekites had been routed. The fifth verse tells us, that "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God," which in this passage could not possibly refer to the present Sinai, more recently hallowed by that name; for by every supposition they were at a considerable distance from it, and it is altogether more probable

that the towering Serbal was meant, which was so near and so accessible.

With Jethro's departure, which closes the eighteenth chapter, there begins an entirely new series of events, which, leaping over a number of days, and bringing us down to the first day of the third month after leaving Egypt, transfers us also to a new locality: "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount." Although in the list given in Num. xxxiii. 15 there is apparently no chronological break between the encampment at Rephidim and that at Sinai, yet we well know that that list was not arranged to show the times when the Israelites moved, but the places where they tarried, and this objection has no validity; but both passages afford strong evidence that the advance from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai was an important one, and on the basis of our theory, show a distinct separation of the Serbal district from that of Sinai.

The expression "before the mount" is now applied, without any qualifying epithet, to the mountain subsequently hallowed as the mount of God, but which up to that time had probably not been regarded with any eye of sanctity. Up to that time, the "mount of God" had apparently indicated Serbal.

The exclamation of Jethro, after the victory over the Amalekites, is worthy of particular attention. It was uttered at Rephidim, not far, according to my theory, from Serbal, and in sight of it,—the mountain which I suppose to have been considered sacred by the Amalekites as well as by the Philistines: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." It seems to point directly at the connection between the gods of the nation which had been overthrown and the mountain which they inhabited, and to tacitly admit the fact, that another mountain must be the home of Jehovah, the God of Moses and of all Israel. And if I am not mistaken, the events of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters of Exodus are in immediate chronological as well as topographical connection, and are purposely separated from the nineteenth, which seems

to commence a new and distinct epoch, and to deal with a fresh field. The miraculous supply of water, the falling of manna, and the victory over the Amalekites, are in immediate connection with Rephidim: from that place we advance up the broad Wadi el Sheikh to the new field of divine operations, the wilderness of Sinai, and the mountain, not as yet hallowed, but which was to be to Israel yet more emphatically than Serbal had been before, the mount of God.

All that follows in the Scriptures, and which occurred in the sacred enclosure or *adytum* of the more central Sinai region, massive, lofty, cool, healthful for the sojourn of a great people, and well adapted with its broad wadis, so unlike the concentrated richness of Wadi Feiran, to give opportunity for herds to roam and graze over a broad tract; and all that pertains to the later journeys northward of the Israelites through Kibroth-hattaavah, Tarah, Hashmonah, Ezion-geber,—I leave out of present view, as not directly connected with the subject.

The only objection to the theory which I have propounded in the above pages is found in the name Horeb, which sometimes applied merely to the rock which Moses struck, and from which water issued. But the later investigations of careful explorers, such as Robinson and Wellsted,[1] as well as of the most learned and critical commentators, such as Hengstenberg and Rödiger,[2] have done much to show that the name Horeb was originally the generic name of the whole Sinai group, and that Sinai was the special name assigned to the mountain of the law-giving; a distinction which has been overlooked by most modern writers, who have used the terms indiscriminately. This so far agrees, too, with Robinson's locating Rephidim very near Mount Sinai, and with the general acceptance of the legend concerning Moses' "resting-place" in the Wadi el Sheikh, and which the Arabs even hold in reverence, that there seems to be no reason for extending the district to which the name Horeb applies as far as the extreme north-west portion of the Jebel Musa group,—as far even as the outlying mounts of Serbal; and especially allowable will this be, if the etymological meaning claimed for the word Horeb be substantiated, "a dry tract of country, rifted by watercourses." This definition would apply

[1] Wellsted, vol. ii.

[2] Hengstenberg, *Pentateuch*; Rödiger's Notes to Wellsted.

to many important wall-like ridges which encompass the central mountain district, in which Horeb, when applied in a far more restricted manner, lies.

And here I leave the subject, hoping that commentators on the sacred text may yet arise, who, with the command of richer illustrative material, may correct what is wrong, and add even to what is right.

SEC. 11. THE SECOND MAIN GROUP OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN REGION—*Continued.*

DISCURSION IV.

THE WADI MOKKATEB, *i.e.* THE VALLEY OF INSCRIPTIONS; WITH ITS TRIBUTARIES, WADI SITTERE, MACHARA, BADERA, AND WADI SHELLAL, AS FAR AS RAS ABU SELIME AND BIRKET FAROUN.

A north-westerly continuation of Wadi Feiran from el-Hessué, where the last palm trees stand, sends a branch to the right, Wadi Ensous, into the mountain region, and thence holds its own course for a distance of two hours between steep walls, throwing off to the left two small wadis, Nedjil and Nisrin, and then turning sharply south-westward, descends towards the sea. A low hillock of sand at the place of this abrupt angle, compels the waters which occasionally issue in a large body from Wadi Feiran to take that direction, and prevents any of them from following down the long Wadi Mokkateb, of which I am now to speak.

This hillock is, then, the true termination of Wadi Feiran, and the true commencement of Wadi Mokkateb: it is the only natural feature which separates them, and prevents them from being one long continuous valley. And in a real sense they are but one: only the name changes; and Serbal is connected with the sea not alone by the Wadi Feiran in its south-westerly bend, but by this continuous north-westerly valley, whose termination is also the sea. The name given to the portion next to el-Hessué is Sikka Tekruri, *i.e.* the Place of Pilgrims; and from that point comes the general designation of Wadi Mokkateb.

Three or four hours from the place of its commencement,

the broad valley throws out towards the north-east the Wadi Machara (spelled also Mahhara, Magara, and Mughareh) in the direction of Jebel Serabit. Farther on the Mokkateb narrows, and sends off a number of side branches towards the north-west and west. One of these, Wadi Badera, which runs almost due westward, leaves the Mokkateb almost exactly opposite the place where Wadi Nusb turns to the east; and as the latter runs to the elevated plain Debbet en Nasb, and to Jebel Serabit, seven or eight hours away, there is a natural cross passage to the coast plain el-Kaa and the sea.

The first accurate investigation into the physical character of Wadi Mokkateb was made by Burckhardt in 1816, who passed through it on his way down to Suez; and since that time this has been thought to be the most comfortable route for travellers to take, who choose the least difficult approach to the central mountain district. It is called the lower route, in contra-distinction to the one which passes over the high plain Debbet en Nasb, and which is usually termed the upper one.

Seetzen endeavoured to visit and explore Wadi Mokkateb as early as 1809, with a view to copy its inscriptions; but neither that journey nor the one of 1807 has added to our knowledge. In the first, he was led from his path by the deceitful Arabs, and compelled to take the northern route; and regarding the second visit no account has reached Europe.

Niebuhr, who had learned at Cairo, from a Franciscan monk, of the existence of the inscriptions in the Wadi Mokkateb, was also very anxious to visit them; but he too was misled, and compelled to take the upper route,—a circumstance which led to his discovery of the Egyptian ruins at Serabit el Chadem. Still he found that the name Wadi Mokkateb was applied by the Arabs to that place also, doubtless because of the inscriptions which are found there, as well as along the lower route.

Burckhardt left the place at the extremity of Wadi Feiran, called el-Hessué, on the morning of June 3. He first followed the valley by a slight slope through its windings W.N.W. and N.W. He found many tamarisk trees growing there, and some manna collected. The fertility of these valleys he ascribes to the alluvial soil brought down from the mountains by the torrents, which soon acquires consistence in the bottom of the

wadi; but if a year passes without rain, these alluvia are reduced to dust, and dispersed by the winds over the mountains from whence they came. He found the surface covered with a yellow clay, in which a variety of herbs was growing. At the end of two hours' journey, the valley took the local name of Wadi el' Beka, or the Valley of Weeping, from the circumstance, as it is related, of a Beduin who wept because his dromedary fell here during the pursuit of an enemy, so that he was unable to follow his companions, who were galloping up the valley towards Feiran. The rock on the side of the road is mostly composed of gneiss. At three hours and a half Burckhardt passed Wadi Romman on his right. The road now turned north-west by west: the granite ends and sandstone begins: among the latter rock salt is found. At five hours he halted under a large impending sandstone rock, where the valley widens considerably, and continues in a westerly direction down to the sea-side. Leaving this valley to the left, he rode in the afternoon north-west by west, ascending slightly over rocky ground, until he reached an upper plain at the end of six hours. The chain of granite mountains continued to his right, parallel with the road, which was overspread with silex; and farther on he met a kind of basaltic tufa, forming low hills covered with sand. He then descended, and at six hours and a half entered the valley called Wadi Mokkateb.

The Wadi Mokkateb extends, according to Burckhardt, for three hours' march in the direction north-west: in the upper part it is three miles across, having to the right high mountains, and to the left a chain of lower sand rocks. Half-way down it becomes narrower, and then takes the name of Seyh Szeder. In most places the sand rocks present cliffs twenty or thirty feet in height. Large masses have separated themselves from the cliffs, and lie at their feet in the valley. These cliffs and rocks are thickly covered with inscriptions, which are continued, with intervals of a few hundred paces only, for at least two hours and a half; similar inscriptions are found in the lower part of the wadi, where it narrows, upon the sandstone rocks of the opposite or north-eastern side of the valley. To copy all these inscriptions, Burckhardt thought would occupy a skilful draughtsman six or eight days: they all consist of short lines, written from right to left, and with the same character invari-

ably at the beginning of each. Some of them are on rocks at a height of twelve or fifteen feet, which must have required a ladder to ascend to them. They are in general cut deeper than those on the granite in the upper country, but in the same careless style. Among them are many in Greek, containing probably, like the others, the names of those who passed here on their pilgrimage to the holy mountain. Some of the latter contain Jewish names in Greek characters. There is a vast number of drawings of mountain goats and of camels, the latter sometimes represented as loaded, and with riders on their backs. Crosses are also seen, indicating that the inscribers were Christians. Burckhardt remarks, that as the Mokkateb was the principal route to Sinai, and as the cliffs are so situated as to afford a fine shade to travellers during the mid-day hours, a good solution is at once offered for the fact that so many inscriptions are found in this valley.

Ruppell passed through Wadi Mokkateb the year after Burckhardt's visit, but his examination was very cursory, and his statements[1] are brief. He copied but two of the inscriptions. He prepared the way for the subsequent visits of Linant and Laborde, whose examination was very thorough, and whose accounts[2] and transcripts of the inscriptions are very full. The later travellers have described the Wadi Mokkateb as not a mere narrow gorge, like many of the wadis, Magara and Feiran for example, but broader, and showing the traces of the effect of water along its sides. The occasional inundations to which it has been subject have gradually undermined the soft sandstone which hems it in; and in the gradual lapse of time, the masses which have served for inscriptions have been detached, and have fallen in situations so accessible, as a general rule, as to invite the hand of the passer-by to trace his name upon them, or to draw some familiar object. These drawings were executed, too, in the opinion of Laborde, when the rock was even softer than it is at the present time. In some of them he found the position of animals reversed, showing that the rocks on which they had been engraved had been undermined and had fallen.

[1] Ruppell, *Reise in Nubien*, 1829, p. 264; also in von Zach, *Corresp. Astronom.* T. vii. 1822, pp. 530-534; *Fundgraben des Orients*, Pt. v. pp. 417, 432.

[2] De Laborde et Linant, *Voy. de l'Arabie Pétrée*, pp. 69, 71.

Laborde conceived that the lines were rather scratched than engraved: they could, however, be made out on the rust-red sandstone without difficulty, by reason of their lighter colour. The figures of men and animals seemed to him to have been of contemporaneous origin, and to be due to the same hands, which should seem at first to be those of pilgrims. But on this Renan remarks, that it is not the usual manner of men who are wearied with travel, and passing only cursorily along, to engrave their names with much pains upon the rocks of the country through which they pass. Many of the figures are of the single-humped camel; very many are of horses and goats, and some are of steinbocks with large purple horns; and there are two ostriches to be seen, according to Laborde. A great proportion of them are preceded by a peculiar curved mark, which seems to indicate that there was the beginning. The whole are executed with great rudeness, and evince only a primitive and rudimentary acquaintance with art.

Niebuhr, who procured nine copies of these inscriptions, and who was well informed regarding all that had been written about them before his day, despite the failure of his plan to investigate them thoroughly in person, was of the opinion that they were not, after all, of much account, and hardly worth the copying; at least in comparison with the far more valuable inscriptions of Egypt. He thought that they would hardly prove to be more than the names and careless drawings left by old travellers, and of almost no historical worth.

Laborde, who also had studied the literature of the subject carefully, and was familiar with what Cosmos, Belon, and others had written, quotes a passage from the journal of a Franciscan monk who passed through the Wadi Mokkateb in 1722, on his way, with a company of his brethren, to the convent at Sinai. The passage runs as follows:

"Scarcely had we left Wadi Feiran when we passed through other wadis, whose sides for a whole league were covered with inscriptions. Thence the rocks which bounded the road received the name of Jebel Mokkateb, or the Graven Mountain. The marks were cut into the marble [it is only sandstone], and were in some cases ten or twelve feet from the ground. Although there were among us men who were familiar with the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic,

Latin, Armenian, Turkish, English, Illyrian, German, and Bohemian languages, yet no one of us could read these inscriptions, which, discovered as they were in this barren and fearful wilderness, and cut with great labour into the hard rock, set us to wondering greatly. They may be the record of important facts now unknown, and may have been recorded here before the time of Christ by the Chaldeans or others."

Various transcripts have been made of these inscriptions from the time of Robert Clayton down. Clayton was an Irish bishop of Clogher, who offered £500 to any one who should copy all the inscriptions. He fancied that they were Israelitish in their origin, and that if they could be deciphered, they would throw much light upon the journey of the Hebrew people. Coutelle copied seventy-five of them; they may be seen in the *Descrip. de l'Egypt. Antiq.* vol. v. 57. Not to speak of smaller attempts, Grey, an Englishman, transcribed one hundred and eighty-seven of the inscriptions of the Wadi Mokkateb, and published them in vol. ii. of the *Transactions of the Roy. Soc. of Literature*, London 1832. Among them may be found nine in Greek and one in Latin. The later researches of Gesenius, Rödiger, Robinson, Beer, and Credner all tend to show, that in whatever part of the Peninsula inscriptions are found, they are homogeneous in their character, and come from the same hands.

The most able and thoroughly furnished mind which has recently studied these ancient traces is Lepsius. After exploring Serbal and its immediate neighbourhood, he left Wadi Feiran, where it turns off towards the left to the sea, and emerged from the primitive mountains into a more level region of sandstone. The loftier range retreated towards the north-west, and encircled in a great bow the hilly, sandy district that he traversed. He next came to the Wadi Mokkateb, or Valley of Inscriptions. Lepsius coincides with the view of an earlier traveller, that it is in consequence of its sheltered position from the mid-day sun, that travellers on their road to Feiran were invited to engrave their names and short mottoes in the soft rock. Lepsius took impressions on paper of as many as he could obtain, or copied with the pen those which were less adapted for an impression. He found the same inscriptions scattered singly in the most various and frequently very

remote places of the Peninsula; and taking them all together, Lepsius had no doubt whatever that they were engraved by the inhabitants of the country during the first centuries before and after Christ. He sometimes found them cut over more ancient Greek names, and not unfrequently Christian crosses are connected with them. Lepsius thinks that the main centre of all the inscriptions to be found in the Peninsula is Mount Serbal.[1]

Lepsius paid special attention to Wadi Machara (spelled also Megora and Magora), which diverges from Wadi Mokkateb to the north. This wadi, however, does not take that name at the place of divergence, but is known as Wadi Kench, which is mentioned by Burckhardt, but which he passed without examining. The gorge-like contraction of Wadi Keneh bears the name of Wadi Machara, or Valley of Caves. Lepsius, in an hour and a half after leaving Wadi Mokkateb, fell in with the first inscriptions of this place. A very little farther on he discovered the first Egyptian stele of the second year of king Amenemha III. The gorge runs farther back, as far as to a stone structure, which testifies to an age greater than that of the pyramids. More than three thousand years before the Christian era, copper mines were discovered in this wilderness, and were worked by a colony of labourers. On the rock just above the deep caves which had been excavated in the search for copper, Lepsius discovered the likenesses of the most ancient Egyptian kings, either in the act of offering sacrifices or of slaying their enemies. Fragments of copper were even yet to be seen. The inscriptions and the sculptures were, as a general rule, in a state of excellent preservation, although so extremely ancient; for the copper mines were worked prior to those at Serabit el Chadem, and the walls received the traces of the hand of man before the pyramids of Ghizeh were reared.

The Wadi Mokkateb can only be said in a general way to extend from Wadi Feiran to the sea: more strictly, it terminates at the point where the Wadi Sittere, the great cross road

[1] It is hardly necessary to refer the reader to Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 57 et seq., for the most exhaustive account of these inscriptions. See also Bonar's *Desert of Sinai*, p. 158 et seq. and p. 376 et seq.; and Bartlett's *Forty Days in the Desert*. It may only be said, that as yet no clue is attained to the origin or meaning of these inscriptions.—ED.

between the southern and the northern route to Sinai, enters it. After that its physical unity still continues, but its name changes; nor are the inscriptions which characterize the first part of its course longer found. Of the Wadi Sittere little need be said. It seems to have been first traversed by Lepsius, who wished to pass from the Wadi Mokkateb with its inscriptions without delay, to the ancient Egyptian mines at Serabit el Chadem, on the northern route. He found that it was impracticable to strike across beyond the termination of Wadi Machara (Mugara or Megora), for that valley was a perfect *cul-de-sac*. He turned back, therefore, from the ancient Egyptian relics which he discovered there, retraced his steps for some distance through the Wadi Mokkateb, and at length turned up into the Wadi Sittere, which brought him safely out into the northern road, not far from the Serabit el Chadem. There were no special objects of interest connected with this cross way, save some Arab graves and huts.

After the confluence of Wadi Sittere (Sudr or Szeder) with Wadi Mokkateb, the latter soon contracts, and the Badera valley is reached. From that point Burckhardt's course is our best itinerary. The valley of the Badera, according to his account, consists of sandstone, and the ground is deeply covered with sand. He then gradually ascended, and in three hours and a half reached the highest place, whence he descended a cliff called Nakb Badera by a narrow and difficult path, into an open plain between the mountains; crossing this plain, in two hours and a quarter he reached Wadi Shellal, which is physically but a prolongation of the same line entered upon at Serbal, or at least at the western end of Wadi Feiran. Wadi Shellal receives its name from the number of cataracts which are formed in the rainy season, by the torrents descending from the mountains. There were many acacia trees growing there; but the season had been so backward that many of them had withered, and during the whole of the morning's journey not a green herb could be discovered. Descending the valley slowly, at the end of four hours and a half he reached its termination, opening upon a sandy plain on the sea-shore. He saw many bones of camels lying about, as is generally the case on the great roads through the desert.

On the plain he fell in with the great road from Tor to Suez, but soon left it, and turned to the right in search of a natural reservoir of rain, in which the Beduins knew that some water was still remaining. At the end of five hours and a half he reached a narrow cleft in the mountain, where he halted, and a mile farther up his guides filled the skins with water. This side road is called Wadi el Dhafory: it is sometimes frequented by the Arabs, because it furnishes the only sweet water between Suez and Tor, though it is out of the direct road, and the well of Morkha is at no great distance. The excellence of the water seems to be owing to the fact that this is the lowest part of the primitive chain of mountains, and it is, according to Burckhardt's belief, the only place between Suez and Tor where they approach the sea, which is but three miles distant, with a stony plain ascending from it. He advises subsequent travellers to inquire for the Dhafory in their way to Feiran, as the water of the Morkha is of the very worst kind. Morkha is but a half-hour's distance from Dhafory, however, in a north-westerly direction, the road leading over level but very rocky ground. It is a small pond in the sandstone rock, close to the foot of the mountains. Two date trees grow near its margin. The bad taste of the water seems to be owing partly to the weeds, moss, and dirt with which the pond is filled, but chiefly, no doubt, to the saline nature of the soil around it. Next to Ayun Musa, in the vicinity of Suez, and Gharundel, it is the principal station on this road. It lies only an hour's remove from the sea, and in full view of the bay which bears the name Birket Faroun, at whose southern shore lies the harbour of Abu Seiime.

This is the northern extremity apparently of the ancient desert of Sin, which stretches away eastwards as far as Wadi Feiran, and southward as one uniform plain as far as the plain el-Kaa. Its southern prolongation along the shore of the sea is not of special interest, excepting to the professed naturalist; and those who wish to ascertain the extent of its organic resources, will consult Schubert's accounts[1] of his tour through that region.

An interesting account of a visit to the more remote recesses of Wadi Shellal, may be found in Lord Lindsay's *Letters*, whose account is not only valuable for its picturesque

[1] Von Schubert, *Reise im Morgenland*, Pt. ii. p. 280.

representation of the spot, but also for the explanation of the name Wadi Shellal, the Valley of Cataracts. In the mountain recesses he found a much increased amount of verdure, and also the traces of the waters, which sometimes break down in great violence, forming natural cascades as they fall.

DISCURSION V.

THE TRIBUTARY RIDGE OF HAMMAN FAROUN—THE ROAD FROM WADI TAIYIBE AS FAR SOUTH AS THE WILDERNESS OF SIN—THE UPPER ROUTE FROM TAIYIBE TO WADI EL SHEIKH AND SINAI—THE EGYPTIAN MONUMENTS OF SARBAT EL CHADEM.

The traveller who is on the route from Suez to Sinai, after reaching the eastern shore of the Red Sea, must necessarily pass the Fountains of Moses, Aijoun Musa, and twenty-one hours from Suez, according to Niebuhr, Wadi Gharundel, which has been a halting-place for caravans from the earliest times. At that point the way is subdivided into three subordinate routes. The western one follows the margin of the sea southward, till after two hours' distance it is closed by the mountains called Hamman Faroun, which advance to the very coast. The middle route leaves this group of mountains at the right, and advances across the Wadis Useit, Thal, Shubeikeh, and enters Wadi Taiyibe at right angles. All these wadis run in a westerly direction from the mountains at the north-east to the sea. At the Taiyibe there are two ways open to the choice of the traveller. He may turn down towards the right, and follow the valley till he comes out at the Morkha well, already referred to, and may then enter the Wadi Shellal, and follow on through the Badera pass, the Wadi Mokkateb, and Wadi Feiran; or he may take what is known as the upper route to Sinai, and bear up the Wadi Taiyibe a little distance, and then follow the continuous line of valleys, which will conduct him to Wadi Sheikh. All travellers take their choice at Wadi Gharundel between these three, or really these two routes; for the last is impracticable, except for a little distance, and those who take it are compelled to turn back again from Hamman Faroun, and follow the Taiyibe valley down to Murkha and the Wadi Shellal on the lower route. Yet, simple

as it seems when stated in this way, many readers have been perplexed with the obscure accounts of travellers, numerous as these are; while in the earlier narratives we meet with a great deal of what is dark regarding this matter,—a point of the first importance to have clear, before we can come to any topographical estimate of the character of the country.

Niebuhr in 1762, and Russegger in 1838, took the first of these three ways, and explored it till they were stopped by the intervening mountains, and compelled to turn back again into what may be called, in reference to the three, the middle route. The travellers who wish to take Wadi Mokkateb, Wadi Feiran, and Serbal in their way, or to visit Tor, take the middle of the three paths which diverge at Wadi Gharundel; among these have been Morison in 1697, Coutelle and Roziere in 1800, Seetzen in 1809, Burckhardt in 1816, Lindsay in 1837, Schubert and Wellsted in 1837, Tischendorf in 1844, Strauss in 1845, and others.[1] The upper route, by way of Wadi Homr, Wadi Nasseb, and Sarbat el Chadem, has been taken by Niebuhr in 1762, Burckhardt in 1816, on his way to Sinai, Ruppell in 1817, Robinson in 1838, Russegger in the same year.

I will speak with what detail may be needful to make clear the topography of each of these routes.

1. *The Way from Wadi Gharundel to Ras Hammam. The Hot Springs Hamman Faroun, and the Baths there.*

According to the account of Niebuhr, these hot springs are only two hours' distance from Wadi Gharundel. The road thither was along the sea-side, and was almost level, being only interrupted by occasional insignificant hills. Arriving at Pharaoh's Baths, or Hamman Faroun, he found a rock, out of which, at about ten feet above the sea-level, hot water was issuing. He examined the place, and found that there were a number of cavities, sending forth steam and heated water. He was told that sick persons were in the habit of frequenting the place for the purpose of being cured of their disorders, but he had no opportunity to judge how effective the medicinal pro-

[1] It would be easy to add to the list, and bring it down to the present time, but it is not necessary; the main object of the author in this citation is to make distinct the great road lines.—ED.

perties of the springs were, excepting by the presence of an Arabian graveyard, which he discovered not far off. The state of the tide prevented any attempts to find a path around the cliffs, and he was obliged to retrace his steps, and follow a narrow gorge, which conducted him at length in a north-easterly direction to Wadi Useit, where he struck the main track of travellers.

Coutelle and Roziere have given us in their work[1] some further particulars regarding these hot baths. They found that the apertures noticed by Niebuhr led to roomy grottos, which were filled with steam and with the fumes of sulphur, and in which the thermometer rose to 34° Reaum.

Ruppell,[2] who sailed along the coast, and was detained for some hours upon a sand-bar, found that these hot saline waters do not spring alone from the rocks on the shore, but that they are found beneath the waters of the harbour, heating the rocks sensibly, and destroying almost all the animal and vegetable life which elsewhere so abundantly characterizes the Red Sea.

But it is to Russegger that we are indebted for the most exhaustive account of the Baths of Pharaoh, and those who wish to learn all that has been discovered regarding them are referred to his work.[3] The chemical analysis, and the detailed account of the grottos, can be better consulted in his own pages than here. He too came back by a cross wadi, and entered the main route.

Seetzen, who had seen the hot springs east of the Dead Sea before he saw the Hammam Faroun, considered the latter so unimportant as to merit little attention, and he has accordingly given us no detailed description of them.

2. *The Lower Caravan Road by way of Wadi Usait, Wadi Thal, and Wadi Taiyibe to the plain at Abu Selime and the station el-Morkha.*

As the traveller follows the regular caravan road from Wadi Gharundel, he first leaves on the right the black, massive, and not unpicturesque rocks of Jebel Hammam, crossing the back of the ridge bearing the name of Jebel Usait.

[1] *Descrip. de l'Egypte Et. mod.* tom. ii. p. 282.
[2] Ruppell, *Reise in Abyssinien*, Pt. i. p. 139.
[3] Russegger, *Reise*, vol. iii.

From this point he gains his first view of Serbal. Descending thence, he crosses the small Wadi Usait (Niebuhr's Usaitu, Burckhardt's Oszaita, Laborde's Oussiet), a small valley shut in by chalk hills, and having a bitter spring, around which a few palms are standing. Leaving Jebel Hammam still more to the right, the way leads on towards the south-east, till Wadi Thal is reached, a gorge which breaks transversely through the Hammam mountain, and forms the narrow passage-way which it is probable that Russegger took on his way from the Baths of Pharaoh to the main road. At Wadi Thal, Burckhardt discovered a few acacias, date palms, and tamarisks;[1] but the scenery exhibits nothing remarkable till Wadi Taiyibe is entered, and the road bears directly down through a narrow and hard paved gorge to the sea. This Wadi Taiyibe has been frequently painted by the glowing words of travellers, who have been charmed with its cheerful verdure and its picturesqueness. Its name signifies goodly, and it seems to merit the title. Lord Lindsay represents the scenery as very striking. During the rainy season, a torrent flows down it ten or eleven feet in depth. The bottom, as in most of these valleys, is sheeted over with white mud, caked so hard as to receive no impression from the camel's feet. Rock-salt of the purest white is dug up plentifully thereabouts. It was at the opening of the Wadi Taiyibe that Seetzen first had the satisfaction of seeing specimens of manna, and of tasting the fruit of the caper plant.

Von Schubert has given us the fullest and most glowing account, however, of the Wadi Taiyibe. He speaks of seeing, on the 21st of February, a little brook, whose waters were a great boon to the vegetation of the valley. Oleander trees gladdened his eyes; rush grass was met farther on; the tamarisk trees gave a grateful shelter to the singing birds, whose notes resounded through the still air; gazelles were seen leaping from cliff to cliff; and as the eye wandered down towards the sea-coast, the same lovely view was to be had which Lindsay so glowingly describes. Schubert's eye was struck with the picturesque forms and colour of the sandstone, traceable eastward as far as the Ghor and the Dead Sea. Besides

[1] Lottin de Laval (*Voy. dans la Pen. Arab.* p. 125) speaks of tamarisks of extraordinary size in Wadi Gharundel, and of *two* palm trees.—Ed

the familiar plants which have already been mentioned, this naturalist discovered the *capparis cartilaginea*, *lotus arabicus*, *deverra tortuosa*, *schradenus baccatus*, *cleorne brachycorma*, etc. The sea, too, which washes the lower extremity of the wadi, he found to be full of organic life, many of the forms being very beautiful. He has no doubt that there, by the sea, was one of the encampments of the children of Israel, and not impossibly the Elim of Scripture.

From this point the route is familiar to us: it passes directly to the triangular plain in which lies the bitter fountain el Morkha, and thence continues by what is called the lower route, to Sinai.[1]

3. *The Upper Caravan Route to Sinai by way of Wadi Hommer over Debbet er Ramleh, Wadi Nasb with its Mineral Shafts, Wadi Chomille over Debbet Chmeir, Wadi Borak, Wadi Genne, and Wadi Osh, terminating in Wadi el Sheikh. Geological Characteristics of this Region.*

If, instead of turning down towards the sea, the traveller turns in a north-easterly direction, he passes very soon, after first traversing Wadi Shubeikeh, *i.e.* the valley of the net, an extremely tortuous and intricate mesh of passages, into Wadi Hommer (*Hommar*, *Humr*), which, with some change of name, but with little of direction, conducts him into the great Wadi el Sheikh. This is the so-called upper route to Sinai. It is shorter than the lower, and is often chosen by travellers, but it is more difficult, and more trying to camels. It was the route taken by Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Robinson, and Russegger.

The road follows a direction almost due east at the outset, and soon passes the base of a bold, tower-like mountain, called Sarbout el Jemel, leaving it on the north. This may be called the true beginning of Wadi Hommer, which is not seen at first, but which shows itself on rounding the base of

[1] Lottin de Laval, the most recent authority on the course taken by the Israelites (*Voy. dans la Pen. Arab.* p. 127), has no doubt that the Wadi Ausit, as he writes it, is the true site of Elim. He is surprised that no previous traveller has laid stress upon it, and thinks that there must have been a supply of food of great value to the Israelites after their painful march. Wadi Gharundel, he asserts, has no supply of water, except after the heavy rains of winter, while Wadi Usait never lacks.—Ed.

Sarbout el Jemel. This valley, which has no perceptible slope on either side, has but little vegetation growing within it: only a few acacia trees are seen, and the rocks are all calcareous. After four hours' march, the valley terminates, entering upon a wide, slightly ascending plain of deep sand, called el-Debbe, a name given by the Arabs to several other sandy districts of the same kind. Niebuhr and Robinson assert that rock-salt is to be found in this neighbourhood. Of this Burckhardt does not speak, nor does he enter into the most minute topographical details regarding the route; but his narrative is remarkably lucid and accurate.

The direction of the road across the above-mentioned plain is about south-east; and at the end of a march of about six hours and a half, a mountainous country, much devastated by torrents, begins. Here the limestone begins to disappear, and the sandstone takes its place. A retired wadi, Wutah by name, comes in from the west; and by its side may be seen the long low chain, called Jebel Wutah, which is a western spur of the Tih range. Ascending a short rocky slope, the sand plain is reached, well known as Debbet er Ramleh. Its height and its breadth admit a very extensive view. At the left is seen the long, high, and uniform chain of the Tih, extending eastward as far as the eye can reach. At the southern base of the Tih mountains is the sand plain, about an hour's walk in breadth, but of great length, extending to the Akhdar valley, or, as may without exaggeration be said, as far as to the Gulf of Akaba. It is the barrier between the Tih range on the north, and the Sinaitic granite mountains on the south, whose wild crags and rifted chasms may be distinctly seen. Looking back, the traveller can see the narrow pass which he has threaded since leaving Wadi Gharundel; and at the north and north-east are two breaks in the Tih chain, through which run the roads to Gaza and Hebron, the first being called the Rakineh, and the second the Mureikhy pass. Between these two there is a third; but it is so steep and difficult, that no European traveller has yet traversed it.

The road bears to the south-east, leaving the Tih range at the left, a wall of mountains never lost from sight, and between it and the rough mountainous country into which the caravan road soon enters, the rough plain called Debbet er Ramleh.

At the right, but not in the true line of travel, is Wadi Nasb, which diverges from the main track, not far from a large rock, on which are inscriptions of a similar character to those found in Wadi Mokkateb. This rock is one of the most notable objects of the whole region, and has probably afforded shelter to travellers for ages, fulfilling the meaning of Isa. xxxii. 3, "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Burckhardt tells us, that shady spots like this are well known to the Arabs; and as the scanty foliage of the acacia, the only tree in which these valleys abound, affords no shade, they take advantage of such rocks, and regulate the day's journey in such a way as to be able to reach them at noon, there to take the siesta.

The Wadi Nasb runs south-east to the sea, striking it not far from the Birket Faroun. It serves accordingly as a channel to conduct away the waters which fall upon the mountains in the rainy seasons. The signification of the word Nasb is not without interest, and shows us how much light the careful study of language may throw upon the geographical character of the east. Reinaud[1] tells us that there are four ways in which man expresses his thoughts: by writing, by pantomimic signs, by a set use of movements with the fingers, and by—Nasb. This word, which is met even in the Koran, is commonly rendered statue, but etymologically it signifies something set up,—the *stele* of the Greeks, the *statua* of the Romans. It can also mean the inscriptions or reliefs on such monuments as those on the Egyptian ruins, to which Wadi Nasb leads. It is variously spelled: the forms Nusb and Nasseb occur, but not Nahasb. This I mention, because Ruppell[2] has supposed that the word is connected with the Arabic word *nahaz*, meaning copper,—a theory not in itself improbable, taken in connection with the copper mines which were once worked here, but not supported by the speech of the Arabs, who always use the word indicating the Egyptian reliefs, which make the neighbourhood of Sarbat el Chadem so eminent.

I will not pause now to speak of the Egyptian monuments to which Wadi Nasb would guide us, but will first pass through the entire route as far as to the Wadi el Sheikh, and then return and speak of what is now omitted.

[1] Reinaud, in *Nouv. Journ. Asiatiq.* T. xvi. p. 71.

[2] Ruppell, *Reise in Nubien*, p. 263.

Passing the divergent Wadi Nasb, the road winds on, soon taking the name Wadi Chomille, or Khomyle, as Burckhardt spells it, whose physical features are not sufficiently striking to occasion any further delay in our sketch, excepting to allude to the side valley which runs from it to Wadi Mokkateb, and which was taken by Lepsius on his excursion to Sarbat el Chadem.' Wadi Chomille leads to Wadi Barak or Bûrk, as Robinson gives it, which is exceedingly rough, and in which the ascent becomes more steep. Here, according to Burckhardt, the rock changes to porphyry, with strata of greenstone; the surface of the former is in most places completely black. The mountains on both sides of the valley are much sheltered: detached blocks and loose stones cover their sides; and the bottom of the valley is filled in many places to the depth of ten feet, with a layer of stones that has fallen down. The wadi becomes narrower at the upper end.

The next valley is entered after passing over a low mountain, and is called Wadi Genne. It is over a half-hour's walk in breadth, and affords excellent pasturage. Here the rithem grows in abundance. The coals of this plant, which is that alluded to in many passages of Scripture under the name of juniper, are remarkable for the length of time that they hold fire, and are alluded to in Ps. cxx. 4,—the expression "coals of juniper" being a proverb, to signify the manner in which the heart cherishes its old grief. The same plant is also alluded to in Job xxx. 4.

Wadi Genne conducts the traveller to Wadi Berah, in which some inscriptions are found, and from which the side valleys Ratama, Osh, and Akhdar radiate, and lead to Wadi el Sheikh. From that point the way is already familiar to us, it having been made the subject of a previous paper, and I need not dwell upon it again. Yet this *resumé* of the physical characteristics of the northern route cannot be properly closed, without citing an interesting remark of Russegger's:[1] "The farther we follow the mountain region toward the heart of the Peninsula, with the continually narrowing and lengthening wadis, we meet a more and more varied vegetation: grasses and clusters of acacia and tamarisks between the steep walls of porphyry and sandstone delight the eye: when the rain falls

[1] Russegger, *Reise*, vol. iii. p. 30.

upon them, these little patches of verdure are really beautiful; and as the granite peaks are neared, the springs become more abundant, and the water more palatable."

Before leaving the subject, and passing to the special examination of the Egyptian ruins and relics at Sarbat el Chadem, it will be well to glance at the geological character of the upper route to Sinai. Only in this way can we gain a clear and truthful conception of its physical characteristics, as well as of the various changes which it may have undergone in the course of time, and the relations which it may have had to the population of the Peninsula in past times. Our most competent guide in a survey of the geology of this region will be my friend the mineralogist Russegger,[1] who has examined it with critical care.

From Suez to Gharundel, and the high bluff near by, called Hammam Faroun, the tertiary formation is the prevailing one, modified only by the progress going on at the coast itself, where new deposits are continually forming. These tertiary rocks have suffered but little change from the first, excepting from the occasional action of water gullying out here and there a gorge which has more recently been filled with debris.

The bluff where the hot springs occur is made up of the following rocks: the tertiary, lying upon an evenly stratified, firm, and flinty limestone; then white chalk; this covers a lower, yellowish-brown, very hard and thick limestone, which in its turn overlies the massive chalk cliffs, 1000 feet high, of Ras Hammam, whose sides fall precipitously towards the north-west.

Going inland towards Wadi Homr or Hommar, all the tertiary rocks disappear, and are succeeded by the region of the upper chalk. The land begins to ascend; and the higher the elevation which it attains, the more varied and picturesque are the forms which it presents. Jebel Homr and Chowowa consist almost exclusively of the upper white chalk; while at the east, the long monotonous cliffs of the Tih are composed entirely of limestone.

A little east of Jebel Homr the limestone region ceases, and the great sandstone district begins. It extends from north-

[1] Russegger, *Reise*, vol. iii. pp. 24–31, and 221–233.

east to south-west, leaving the limestone tract to stretch away towards the north-west. From the sandstone plateau of Debbe or Debbet er Ramleh (Ramleh signifying sand), which lies 1500 feet above the sea, Russegger saw the sandstone region extend down through Wadi Nasb, 1291 feet above the sea, through Wadi Chomille or Kamyleh, 2074 feet, and Wadi Borak or Bûrk, 2849 feet, beyond which masses of porphyry and granite were to be seen, ascending to a height of over 3000 feet. The peaks, which were close to Wadi Nasb, a side wadi leading off from the northern route down towards the sea, Russegger estimated to be 3500 feet in height,—those which hemmed in Wadi Borak to be 4500. The sandstone of this region has a fine grain, and is not at all allied, according to its appearance, to the coarse-grained sandstone of Nubia and Upper Egypt. Its colour is generally a dark, brownish red. It is not found pure to any considerable extent, but is mixed with layers of white, red, yellow, and motley-coloured marl, which are often very thick, and which give to water that peculiarly bitter taste which is so often noticeable in the Peninsula.

Russegger tells us, that when on the Debbet er Ramleh, he was so near to Jebel Tih, that he was able to sketch its outlines, and to gain a good insight into its physical character. Its height seems to be about 2500 feet. Towards the west its sides are steep, indeed almost precipitous; and forming, as it does, not an ordinary mountain chasm, but a plateau, it seems to stand like a gigantic wall, gradually shelving towards the south-east, and overlying the sandstone, which creeps up to its base. In this long line of wall Russegger could discern no break, nor a single point where it would have been possible to ascend to the plateau above.

From the plain Debbe the descent is gradual down into the interesting sandstone district of Wadi Nasb, the mountains at whose sides rise to a great height, while the valley sinks away from the level of the plain Debbe or Debbet er Ramleh, 1500 feet to 1291 feet above the sea. Jebel Nasb, however, rises to the height of 3500 feet, and is a shapely-formed mountain group.

Russegger turned aside from the main route to Sinai, in order to study the geological character of Wadi Nasb and its

vicinity. He found the spring of water which has been so often praised by travellers, and which is so valuable a boon, that many turn aside merely to get a supply from it to last them in their further journey. He soon discovered the presence of iron in the rocks near by, but he could not discover the copper works, which Ruppell had asserted to be but a half-hour's distance from the spring; and his account fails us at just the place where it would be of special value. He discovered some shrubs and date trees in the valley. In its lower gorges there were blocks of porphyry, syenite, and greenstone—a proof that large masses could not be far away; but he failed to discover them. On the western face or wall of the wadi, he discovered holes which had been begun in the rock, as if for the purpose of mining; but they had been abandoned very soon, either for the want of wood to smelt with, or from the absence of the mineral sought.

But in 1822 Ruppell had been more successful in his explorations, and had gained sight of remarkable copper mines in that neighbourhood. I must leave Russegger's account for a little while, therefore, and intercalate so much of Ruppell's description as may seem to throw light upon the mineralogical character of Wadi Nasb.[1] After leaving the regular route, Ruppell[2] continued in a south-south-easterly direction down Wadi Nasb for nearly two hours, when he came to the well-known spring. In its neighbourhood he saw the traces of ancient smelting furnaces, surrounded with heaps of slag and ashes. He afterwards searched for the mines, which were said to be near, and which he was commissioned by the Viceroy of Egypt to examine. These he found to consist of a number of wedge-shaped openings in the sandstone, revealing great masses of an earthy-black oxide of copper (*cuivre oxidé noir terreux*). In many places there seemed to be more than two hundred feet through them. Frequently the ancient miners had pierced them, converting them into a real labyrinth, and leaving only slender pillars to sustain the roof, and prevent its falling in. Judging by the extent of these passage-ways, the whole mass must be of very great dimensions. The mineral is very easily

[1] *Correspondence astronomique*, 1822, vol. vii. p. 530, etc.

[2] Ruppell, *Reise in Nubien, etc.*, 1829, pp. 180, 263–267; *Carte de l'Arabie Pétrée, etc.*, p. E. Ruppell, 1822.

worked, being found in a remarkably pure state, particularly in one place, where the amount of copper ore was by no means exhausted. Ruppell ascribes the abandonment of these mines to an increasing scarcity of wood at the time when they were worked. His analysis showed the existence of eighteen parts of copper, and of as many of iron, in a hundred, with some traces of arsenic. Yet, despite this large percentage of copper ore, Ruppell discountenanced the Viceroy of Egypt's plan of again working the mines, holding that, with the large royalty which must be paid to the central Turkish government, the great scarcity of fuel, and the ignorance of even the best workmen to be gained there, they could not be made profitable. The only way which he suggested to give them a real value, was to transport the best ore in the rough state across the Red Sea, and smelt it in Abyssinia, where wood is abundant.

There were two places where the ancient miners had specially worked in their search for copper, and the most northern one of these appeared to him to be exhausted. Upon the hill which enclosed the shafts, Ruppell discovered a small obelisk of sandstone about eight feet in length. It had fallen from its primitive position, and the side which was towards the ground exhibited hieroglyphics very well cut. The other sides had apparently once been covered with the same, but the storms of ages had effaced them. This was evidently the work of Egyptian hands, and in Ruppell's judgment solved the question who the ancient miners of the region had been. In the neighbourhood of Wadi Nasb he found on a sandstone rock some of the same kind of inscriptions as those of Wadi Mokkateb. The distance of this place from Suez Ruppell estimated as thirty hours, and from here to the Egyptian relics at Sarbat el Chadem lying to the south-east as two and a half hours. At the close of his later account, published in 1829, Ruppell speaks of some copper mines lying seven hours south-east of Wadi Nasb, which up to the present time are entirely unknown,[1] unless they be those at Wadi Machara or Magora.

Since the visits of Russegger and Ruppell, Lepsius has spent some time in the examination of the mines of Wadi Nasb. He

[1] For some later evidence the reader is referred to a paper in *Vacation Tourists* for 1862-3, London 1864, contributed by Rev. R. Tyrwhitt, pp. 337, 350.—ED.

tried in vain to follow the course which the latter asserted that he had taken, nor could he discover anywhere the fallen obelisk sculptured with hieroglyphics. He was equally unsuccessful in his efforts to find any Arabs who were familiar with the whole region, but he explored as carefully as his time would allow.[1] His course was south and south-south-east from Sarbât el Chadem towards Wadi Nasb, which he approached through side gorges. Near the spring he discovered a pile of slag, and close at hand a flat place covered with it. He also saw traces of molten metal on the mountain side hard by. His conclusion was that the ore was brought in the rough state out through the gorges in the mountains, and melted there, as it had been apparently at Sarbat el Chadem. He saw not far from the spring bits of copper, and sandstone mixed with copper and antimony, scattered on the ground. He then began to explore the neighbourhood, and not far away he found a beaten track leading to a pile of slag, lying directly in the wadi, and exposed to the whole force of the wind. It was about seventeen feet in height. Farther down the valley he saw other masses of slag covering the hills, and uniformly facing the windward side. A number of seyal trees growing in the neighbourhood seem to indicate the existence at an earlier period of a far larger growth of wood than is now found, and may answer the question whence the fuel was obtained which the furnaces required. And though in the lapse of time all traces of human industry have passed away, yet the circumstantial evidence is strong—the piles of slag, the spring of good water, the continuous wind blowing down the wadi—that at a very remote period the arts of civilisation were cultivated and practised there.

The side valleys could not be followed far, so narrow and difficult of access did Lepsius find them; but the number of inscriptions like those of Mokkateb is very great, and points, in the opinion of the great Egyptologist, to the existence there of a race of shepherds so far civilised that they could write in this rude way. They may have lived here contemporaneously with the Egyptians; their labour may have given food to the

[1] The published account of Lepsius omits all this. It was extracted by Ritter from his manuscript diary, and is worth presenting to the English reader, in consequence of misapprehensions which have grown out of Lepsius' account of Sarbat el Chadem.—ED.

[illegible]iers from the Nile, and have been useful for transporting goods from Egypt.

From this point Lepsius followed Wadi Nasb down to the sea, passing some inscriptions, but meeting no more traces of mines. His way took him into Wadi Shellal on the lower route, and thence to Abu Selime, where his vessel was awaiting him.[1]

We can now leave the account of the ascent from the mines in Wadi Nasb, passing over for the present Sarbat el Chadem, and resume the consideration of the geological character of the whole country between Suez and Sinai, from which we have been led to make the above digression.

On the eastern wall of Wadi Nasb may be seen a coarse-grained syenite underlying the horizontal layers of sandstone, and accompanied by upright masses of porphyry. The syenite is interchanged here and there with greenstone. The syenite and porphyry are of apparently cotemporaneous origin. The layers of sandstone which overlie the syenite do not seem to have ever suffered any disturbance; not so, however, with the underlying rocks, which exhibit marked changes, and display traces of violent natural convulsions. The syenite and porphyry seem to supplement each other, and to run into each other with transitions which are sometimes almost imperceptible. The thickness of the syenite is in some places more than five hundred feet, that of the porphyry more than a hundred. The blended rock is evidently the cropping out of a mighty dyke, which could be traced for a distance of two hours, till both extremities disappeared under the sandstone.

The farther one advances towards the south-east, and the greater the elevation becomes as the central granite of Sinai is approached, the more massive become the dykes of porphyry which thrust themselves out from the sandstone, until at length the porphyry is found in immense masses, whole mountains being in some cases composed of it.* But in the Wadi Chomile (Kamyleh), which leads from the mouth of Wadi Nasb south-

[1] An anonymous correspondent of the *Athenæum* (No. 1649, June 4, 1859) speaks of discovering "the remains of the piers and wharves whence they shipped their metal." No more full account is given, which is the more to be regretted, as the writer's means of ascertaining the facts seem to have been singularly favourable.—ED.

easterly, and by a graveyard mentioned by many travell[illegible] sandstone is the prevailing rock; it is found, however, mixed with some marl. South-east of Wadi Chomile the porphyry grows more abundant, and at length becomes the prevailing rock. This porphyry, which is similar to that found in Wadi Nasb, is full of greenstone dykes, of a foot in thickness, all of them running from north to south.

From Wadi Chomile, 2074 feet above the sea, the land rises rapidly. The porphyry is not found pure here, and free from sandstone, but traces of the latter are still found in the form of great nub-like masses, and also of deposits filling large hollows in the porphyry. The layers of this sandstone retain their original position, very seldom showing any signs of violence and consequent change. After passing from Wadi Chomile to Wadi Barak or Bûrk, the porphyry begins to be accompanied by a fine-grained granite, which in time becomes the chief rock, and excludes the porphyry. And the nearer we approach to Sinai, the clearer become the traces that we are approaching the granite district. Only once in the Wadi Barak does the porphyry appear in such vastness as to form whole mountains, and at the end of the Barak we come upon the true granite region, with its fantastic and jagged outlines. The elevation, too, has there become great. Wadi Osh is 3500 feet above the sea; and from it the ascent is rapid to locations 4000, 5000, and even 7000 feet above the sea.

Sárbat el Châdem (plural Sarâbit el Chadem), the Egyptian Ruins in Wadi Nasb. The Heaps of Slag, the Temple Walls, the Inscriptions, and the Names of the Ancient Kings.

The singular and mysterious ruins of Sarbat el Chadem owe their discovery to a mistake, or a purposed misdirection, of Carsten Niebuhr. He had heard in Cairo of the existence of the singular inscriptions of the Mokkateb, and determined to explore them, and ascertain their precise character and value. The information which he gained upon this point was of a very indefinite character; but furnished with what he could command, he set out on his journey. On the third day after leaving Suez he visited the Hammam Faroun, or Baths of Pharaoh; and on the next, September 10, 1762, he entered

Wadi Nasb, being directed thither by his guides, who assured him that it led to the Jebel el Mokkateb, or Mountain of Inscriptions. The next day he climbed up the hill, on the summit of which Sarbat el Chadem lies, by a steep and rugged path; and instead of finding inscriptions, he was surprised to discover on the summit what seemed to him an Egyptian cemetery. At any rate, he could conjecture no other purpose to which it could have been applied, although he had seen nothing of the same kind in Egypt. Still he was sure that only a slight acquaintance with Egyptian architecture and hieroglyphics was needed, to convince any person that the ruins could be no other than Egyptian.

The hill, he says, is covered with stones of from five to seven feet in length, inscribed with hieroglyphics, some of them standing on end, while others are lying flat. In the middle of these stones is a building, of which only the walls now remain; and within it are also a great many of the sepulchral stones. At one end of the building seems to have been a small chamber, of which the roof still remains. It is supported upon square pillars; and these, as well as the walls of the chamber, are covered over with hieroglyphic inscriptions. Through the whole building are various busts, executed in the manner of the ancient Egyptians. The stones and the busts are of a hard and fine-grained sandstone.

Niebuhr was not permitted to copy any of the inscriptions unless on the payment of a hundred crowns, the sheikh pretending to fear that he was in search of hidden treasure, and that his copying was a kind of incantation, which would enable him to charm away whatever might lie buried there. A little gift to one of his guides accomplished the purpose, however, and enabled him to take a transcript of some of the inscriptions. They were as well executed, he assures us, as any that he had ever seen in Egypt. Niebuhr conjectured that they were the work, not of persons actually inhabiting Egypt, but of an Egyptian colony, or of some people who had adopted the arts and manners of Egypt. He did not even suspect that mines in the neighbourhood had called them thither; and it was a long time before subsequent explorers noticed those vast mounds whose existence throws apparently so much light upon this ancient mystery.

It is singular that Burckhardt, who passed so near to these interesting remains, did not learn of their existence, and turn out of his way to visit them: the fact is only explainable on the ground of his eagerness to hasten as rapidly as possible to Akaba. It is to be regretted, for this master in the art of topographical description would have given us an account of great value.

Ruppell's description, which followed that of Niebuhr, cannot compensate for the loss of one by Burckhardt, for Ruppell paid more attention to the copper mines and the piles of slag than to the antiquities and inscriptions. Yet we are indebted to him for ascertaining the true name of the place, and for noticing that the Arabs did not call it el-Mokkateb, or the Place of Inscriptions, at all, but designated it as Sarbat el Chadem. After a difficult ascent of an hour's duration,[1] he reached the narrow crest of the hill, where lay what Niebuhr had supposed to be an Egyptian cemetery. Sarbat el Chadem was the name given to a tract, a hundred and sixty feet long and seventy feet wide, enclosed on all sides by heaps of stones, which are the ruined fragments of the rectangular building in the middle, which they still surround. The entrance to this structure Ruppell suspected to have originally been at the south, where are still to be seen standing four small pillars with square capitals (probably Niebuhr's small square column), every one displaying a head of Isis with cow's ears. The pediment of the pillars is a tolerably long rectangle, which struck Ruppell as a singular feature in Egyptian architecture. The shafts of the pillars, which projected only three feet above the rubbish, were covered with hieroglyphics. North of these columns are the remains of walls more than fifty feet in length, but only just discernible above the debris. Towards the west are the ruins of a small temple, at whose entrance small pyramidal propylæa are to be seen, analogous to those found in Egyptian ruins; but its interior is utterly destroyed: only the niches where the winged guardians of the gate reclined, and two pillars with square capitals lying on the ground, were still discernible.

[1] E. Ruppell, *Schreiben an v. Hammer*, Livorno 1817, in the *Fundgraben des Orient.* Pt. v. pp. 430–432, and Tabul. i. See also his *Reisen in Nubien*, pp. 267–269, and his *Reisen in Abyssinien*, Pt. i. p. 204 et seq.

On the east side there are three catacombs hewn in the rock, one of which is decorated with hieroglyphics: one room with a flat roof or ceiling is supported by a single pillar (as in Niebuhr's account). In every one of the catacombs are excavations, made apparently for the reception of mummies. On the bottom of one of these, Ruppell discovered several little statues, one a kneeling figure, and two near it in a sitting posture. Within the enclosure, and in the temple itself, he saw the numerous stones which Niebuhr thought were grave-stones, each one about seven or eight feet long, and standing in a pediment rectangular in shape, and about two feet long and fifteen inches wide. The top was arched, and all four faces of each stone were covered with hieroglyphics: among them, on one face, was generally seen the winged egg with two serpents, and below several priests offering sacrifices to Osiris and to Isis. Ruppell considered it probable that a colony which once worked the copper mines near by, were the builders of this old Egyptian city on the hill; while the degree of wear occasioned by exposure to the weather, convinced him that the works were of great antiquity.[1]

To the hasty visit of Laborde we are indebted not only for a sketch confirmatory in a great degree of that of Ruppell's, but for drawings[2] of the ruins. Laborde was very much perplexed by the historical questions which suggested themselves to his mind, especially in connection with the supposed discrepancy between the dates of the hieroglyphics in Wadi Machara (Magara) and those of Sarbat el Chadem. He was the first to discover the turquoises in these mountains; his guides found five of them, but set no value upon them, excepting as *medicinal*. They are washed out of the rocks so abundantly, according to Laborde, that a large collection of them could easily be gathered.[3]

Robinson, in his account, does not add any special particulars to those mentioned by Ruppell. He doubts whether the im-

1 Robinson, *Bib. Research.* i. p. 79, speaks of this account by Ruppell as the most exact which had appeared.—Ed.

2 *Voy. de l'Arabie Pétree*, pp. 42-44. *Tombeaux de Sarbout el Chadem.*

3 See an account by Macdonald of the extracting of turquoises in *Vacation Tourists* for 1862-3, p. 351.—Ed.

pression that this is an ancient Egyptian cemetery is correct, though the upright stones resemble the tombstones of the West; but he does not attempt to give a solution of the question as to the intent of these temples and these memorial stones in the midst of solitude and silence, in this lone and distant desert, with which they would seem to have no possible connection. Robinson quotes, however, with a certain degree of approval, an ingenious hypothesis suggested to him by the late Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Prudhoe, that this was perhaps a sacred place of pilgrimage for the ancient Egyptians, just as the mountain near Mecca is to the Mohammedans at the present day; and that to it the Egyptian kings made each his pilgrimage, and erected a column with his name. Robinson thinks that a slight historical ground for such a hypothesis may be found in the fact, that Moses demanded permission for the Israelites to go three days' journey into the desert, in order to sacrifice,—a demand which seems to have caused no surprise to the Egyptians, as if it were something to which they were themselves accustomed (see Ex. viii. 27, 28).

Letronne[1] thought it more probable that the mines, and the colonization which they induced, were the occasion of the erection of the temple, just as in analogous cases in Egypt,—as, for example, in the emerald mountains near Berenice, or according to Wilkinson, in the porphyritic mountains of Upper Egypt, where all centres of population were characterized in every instance by the presence of a temple and tombstones. Yet Letronne finds himself at a loss to explain how the steles of the Egyptian kings came to be there: he remarks, however, that among the cartouches which Laborde had transcribed, there were the names of Osortasen I. and II. of the sixteenth dynasty, proving that this colony dated back to the twenty-second century before the Christian era.

This fact, which the later investigations of Lepsius have completely established, overthrows the theory advanced in Laborde's work, more recently published than his description of Sarbat el Chadem already referred to, that these monuments owe their origin to a period subsequent to the time of Moses.

[1] Letronne, in *Journ. des Savans*, 1835, Août, p. 472; Wilkinson, *Notes on the Eastern Desert of Upper Egypt*, in *Journ. of the Roy. G. Soc. of London*, 1832, T. ii. pp. 51-53.

No trace, according to Laborde,[1] of Egyptian colonization in the Sinai Peninsula is to be found in the books of Moses: their author is entirely silent regarding any Egyptian memorials or active undertakings in that desert region; and yet, to Laborde's great astonishment, the claim is made, that in two localities, through which or in whose immediate neighbourhood Israel must have passed, at Magora and Sarbat el Chadem, such memorials are said to be found. But had there been such memorials at the time of the exodus, Israel, he thinks, would have utterly destroyed them, and celebrated their overthrow with solemn songs, as it did at the victory over Amalek: nay, it would have derived much advantage from the plunder to be found in such a colony. Laborde's conclusion is, that it is not to be thought of for a moment, that the sons of Amalek, who were met in Wadi Feiran, could be confounded with Egyptians, and that we are left to infer that the mines, temples, and steles were begun after the time of Moses, but that the colonist workmen, wishing to pay due honour to their Egyptian kings, to whom they were indebted for protection, set up their images here, and, in order to preserve complete the chronological order of their dynasty, added those of the earlier rulers of their nation. Whether such an arbitrary explanation gains much in force from the unmerited contempt which Laborde heaps upon Robinson, in order to decry the value of his signal services to biblical geography, ascribing to him "suffisance" and narrowness of mind, I leave others to judge, and merely remark, that the silence of Moses is, as Laborde truly says, singular; but that we are not to suppose that Moses recorded all the incidents of the journey, and that, in the second place, it was by no means necessary to suppose that the Israelites turned out of their way to Sarbat el Chadem,—a point so difficult to reach,—or if they took the lower route, that they went up the Wadi Maghara as far as to the Egyptian settlements there.

From the investigations of Lepsius[2] at Sarbat el Chadem, we learn that the Egyptian inscriptions are merely memorials

[1] L. de Laborde, *Commentaire géographique sur l'Exode et les Nombres*, Paris 1841, fol. p. 131, Append. pp. 9, 17, etc.

[2] Lepsius' MS., consulted by Ritter; condensed in the *Letters from Egypt*, of which there is an English translation.—ED.

of the copper works near by, nearly all the valleys in the neighbourhood exhibiting abundant traces of iron and copper contained in the sandstone. The whole district is designated upon the steles as Mafkat or "Copper Land," and was under the protection of the goddess Hathor, who was called mistress of Mafkat. The temple at Sarbat el Chadem was dedicated to her, the most ancient part of which, the little rock chapel with a single pillar standing in the midst, was built during the last dynasty of the old monarchy, by Amenemha-Mœris. Yet at some distance from it there stands an old stele of the second king of the same twelfth dynasty. This very remarkable temple, says Lepsius, stands upon a high sandstone ridge, which shelves off into a broad sandy valley, and is only accessible from the west, where it joins the primitive mountains: it is not approachable from the valley. It is filled full of high steles, many of them inscribed, like obelisks, upon all four sides: so very numerous, indeed, are they, that the walls of the temple seem erected simply for the purpose of enclosing them. Yet many of these steles are set up outside of the temple and on the adjoining hill. These remarkable antiquities seem to have entirely engrossed the attention of all travellers before Lepsius to such a degree, that they have failed to notice the vast heaps of slag, which come almost to the temple walls. The north-easterly piles, two hundred and fifty feet long and a hundred broad, are covered with a thick, massive crust of iron slag; and their nature is easily discernible by their coal-black colour. The ore was probably brought in the rough state to the top of this hill, where it was exposed during the melting to the steady north-east wind, which sweeps over the hill, usually with considerable strength. The steles are exactly similar in their general character to those found on the Kese'r road, and in other Egyptian quarries: the form, however, is here new, but evidently conditioned by the circumstances of the place, which did not afford upright walls into which they might be hewn.

The meaning of Sarbat el Chadem (Sarabit el Chadem in the plural) is variously given. *Sarbut* is the word applied by the Beduins to any protuberance, from the hump of a camel to a mountain; while *chadem*, or ring, may refer to the *discus* which was wrought around the steles. The place would then signify the "Hill of the Rings." Dr Abeken differs from this,

defining *chadem* as servant; and the name Sarbat el Chadem may have been given in view of the slaves who were sacrificed here. This is mere conjecture.

On the steles of Sarbat el Chadem, whose form is generally that of the so-called obelisks of Crocodilopolis, thin, narrow, and very high, the most ancient king seems to be Suefren, who is represented twice as kneeling (and therefore taken during his life), and once as dead. He seems to have ruled not long before the twelfth dynasty. The most distant stele, at the highest part of the temple plateau, is devoted to Sestorteses I., the predecessor of the great Sesostris. The little rock-grotto is set apart in honour of Amenemha-Mœris, and its vestibule to his successor Amenemha IV., with whose reign the twelfth dynasty of the ancient monarchy closes. There are no memorials, as might be expected, of the period of Hykso; but there are those of later kings, Amenophis I., Tutmes III., Tutmes IV., Amenophis IV., Menephta, under whose reign the Israelites went out of Egypt, and others.

CHAPTER VII.

SEC. 12. THE SINAI PENINSULA BEYOND THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN DISTRICT;

THAT IS, THE NORTHERN PORTION, EXTENDING TO THE ISTHMUS OF SUEZ, TO PALESTINE, AND TO THE DEAD SEA.

AVING considered what may be regarded in a limited sense the Sinai Peninsula proper, *i.e.* the portion which displays itself as a wonderful isolated mountain land lying between the Gulfs of Akaba and Suez, we now pass on to the study of the great northern plateau, which may be regarded as the more strictly continental part of Arabia Petræa. This plateau serves as a bond of connection between the mountain region of the south, and the Mediterranean coast of Egypt, Philistia, and Judea; and extending, as it does, from the Gulf of Akaba to the Dead Sea, even the itineraries of ancient Roman travellers did not leave us quite in ignorance of some portions of it. The whole domain is now known as the Desert et Tih Beni Israel (a designation, however, of which the present Beduins know nothing); and under that general term are summed up all its varied physical forms, its mountains, and valleys, and plains. Of these we have no more detailed and specific accounts than have been given us by the rapid flights of travellers, who have had little inducement to linger in a region so barren that it is almost deserted even by the wild Arabs, and which has no place suited for permanent and prosperous settlements. Its only significance and importance arise from the simple fact, that it has served alike as a barrier and a bond between the people of Egypt, Edom, Midian, the Nabathæans and Arabs, and the inhabitants of Palestine and Syria; but desert as it is, yet this very characteristic may have made it a land of as much his-

torical influence as many a far richer and more productive region has been.

There is but a single place in it which will long detain our attention by existing monuments of human power and skill: that is Petra in Wadi Musa, the city which has given its name to the whole region. But inasmuch as it retains the same character for strife that it bore in the time of Edom, European travellers have been compelled to hasten through it, and regard it with hasty glances.

The et-Tih desert has within very recent times been visited more than ever before, and its physical character has been very carefully observed. Not to speak of the Mecca pilgrimages, whose course leads them from west to east across it, almost coincident with the routes of Burckhardt and Ruppell, we have the results of Lord Prudhoe's[1] journey directly across the country from Suez (Adjerud) *via* Nakhl, and cutting the three leading wadis, el-Arish, el-Akaba, and el-Ghor, to Wadi Musa or Petra. Unfortunately this nobleman has left us no journal of his route; but he imparted at a later period to Robinson[2] the names of the stations.

In addition to the routes already referred to repeatedly from Suez to Sinai, embracing that part of the country now to be considered, lying between Wadi Gharundel and Suez, there are the following, which I will specify in chronological order:—

1. Seetzen's[3] journey through the desert et-Tih, from Hebron and Beersheba, through Wadi Nakhl, over the sand plain el-Raml and Akhdar to Sinai, taken between the 26th of March and the 10th of April 1807.

2. Burckhardt's[4] route from Kerak on the Dead Sea to Petra, travelled by him from the 4th to the 26th of August 1812.

3. Bankes, Irby and Mangles,[5] and Legh's[6] route from

[1] The late Duke of Northumberland, to whom Robinson's *Biblical Researches* are dedicated.—Ed.

[2] Robinson, *Bib. Research.* vol. i. Note xxii. p. 599, Eng. ed.

[3] Seetzen, *Reise, etc.*, in *Mon. Correspond.* vol. xvii. 1808, pp. 132–165; also his manuscript account, 1807.

[4] Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria, etc.*, pp. 395–439.

[5] L. Irby and J. Mangles, *Travels*, 1817–18, pp. 335–444.

[6] Mr Legh, *Route in Syria*, in William Macmichael, *Journ. from Moscow to Constantinople*, Lond. 1819, pp. 194–241.

Hebron, by way of Kerak and Shobak, to Wadi Musa and Petra, from the 8th to the 29th of May 1818.

4. Sir Frederick Henniker's[1] journey from the Convent of St Catherine, by way of Sarbat el Chadem, through Kelat-in-Nakhl, and across the desert direct to Gaza, from April 24 to May 4, 1820.

5. Leon de Laborde[2] and Linant's route from Suez, *via* Kalaat el Akaba, to Petra and back, in 1828.

6. Dr G. H. von Schubert's[3] journey from Akaba to Wadi Musa, and through the Ghor to Hebron, from March 15th to the 26th, 1837.

7. Lord Lindsay's[4] route from Akaba, through Wadi Araba to Petra and Hebron, from the 17th to the 30th of April 1837.

8. Edw. Robinson's[5] tour from Akaba Ælа, through the desert et-Tih, *via* Wadi Lyssan (Lysa), Abdeh (Eboda), Bir es Seba (Beersheba), to Hebron, from the 5th to the 14th of April 1838.

9. Robinson's journey from Hebron to Wadi Musa and back, from the 26th of May to the 6th of June.

10. Col. Callier,[6] route taken in 1835.

11. Compte J. de Berton :[7] *Itinéraire de la Mer Morte à Akaba, par les Wadys Ghor, el Araba, et el Akaba, et retour de Pétra à Hebron*, 1835.

12. J. Russegger's[8] return from Sinai through the plain Akhdar, *via* Nakb el Mureikhi and the Tih plateau, traversing Wadi Arish to Hebron, between the 1st and the 15th of November 1838.

[1] Sir Frederick Henniker, *Notes during a Visit to Egypt, Sinai, and Jerusalem*, Lond. 1823, pp. 238–265.

[2] L. de Laborde et Linant, *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée*, publ. p. L. de Laborde, Paris 1830.

[3] Von Schubert, *Reise in das Morgenland*, Erlangen 1839, vol. ii. pp. 396–462.

[4] Lord Lindsay, *Letters on Egypt, etc.*, pp. 9–50.

[5] E. Robinson, *Biblical Researches*.

[6] Camille Callier, *Lettre*, in *Journ. des Savans*, 1836, pp. 46–48.

[7] *Bulletin de la Soc. de Geog. Paris*, 2d ser. tom. xi. 1839 ; and *Mém. sur la dépression de la Vallée du Jourdain et du Lac Asphaltite*, the same, tom. xii. pp. 113–166.

[8] J. Russegger, *Reise*, 1847, vol. iii. pp. 55–74, 196–201, 239–247, Stuttgardt 1847 ; also *Reise*, in *Allgemein Zeitung*, 1838, No. 53.

13. John Kinneir's[1] journey from Akaba by way of Wadi Musa and Petra to Hebron and Gaza, in March 1839.

14. Baron Koller's itinerary[2] from Sinai *via* el-Ain, and through Wadi el Atiyeh to Akaba, in March 1840.

15. F. A. Strauss'[3] journey from Sinai through el-Nakhl and Beersheba to Hebron, in 1845.

16. Dr Abeken's[4] journey from Sinai by way of the pass er-Raquineh and Nakhl to Hebron, in June 1845.

From this general summary of authorities, it appears that all the routes, excepting those taken by the Mecca caravans, running east and west, fall into three main groups :—

(1.) Those at the northern extremity of the Sinai roads, and connecting Wadi Gharundel and Suez.

(2.) Those which cross the Tih range, and traverse the desert et-Tih Beni Israel, running from the Sinaitic mountains to Gaza or Hebron.

(3.) Those which course along the eastern frontier, leaving Akaba on the Ælanitic Gulf, passing through the great depression which characterizes that region, and at length reach the Dead Sea.

From the mass of documents already cited, I shall endeavour to collect materials sufficient to prepare a physical sketch of the whole region, and to give the reader some idea of its most important geographical characteristics.

DISCURSION I.

THE ROUTE FROM SUEZ TO WADI GHARUNDEL.

The first account of this route to which I will refer is Niebuhr's, which, though it has since been to a great extent supplanted by more detailed researches, yet is not without value for the light which it throws on the general topography of the country.

On the evening of the 6th of September 1762 he crossed the gulf, and started the next morning on his journey southward, travelling about twenty-four miles that day. On his

[1] J. Kinneir, *Cairo, Petra, and Damascus*, 1839, Lond. 1841.

[2] In *Journ. of the Roy. Geog. Soc. of Lond.* 1843, vol. xii. pp. 75–79.

[3] *Sinai und Golgotha*, Berlin 1848, pp. 165–187. [4] MS. account, 1848.

return from Sinai, the 25th of September, he crossed the head of the gulf at Kolzum on dromedaries, the Arabs wading, as the water was not more than a foot in depth. When the tide is in, it cannot be forded, however, but must be crossed with boats. The breadth at the last-mentioned place was 3450 feet.' It was here that Niebuhr conjectured that the passage of the Israelites was effected.

A little distance beyond the place where he encamped the first night, he fell in with a place called Aijun Musa, or the Wells of Moses. These he describes as four or five holes in the sand, the water found in which is of a very indifferent quality, and becomes very turbid whenever any of it is drawn. As the holes bear the name of Moses, the Arabs ascribe them to the Jewish lawgiver; and Niebuhr speaks of the whole country through which he was then passing, as deriving its interest from the former journey of the Jews through it. The very spot now called the Wells of Moses is the spot designated by Arab tradition as the scene where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Following on his course, he crossed successively Wadis Attuerwik (Tuerwik), Wardan, and et-Tih, at the latter of which he encamped, after a journey of ten and a half hours.

On his second day's march he crossed the Girdan plain, and advanced for seven hours a little east of south to a great mass of felstone, which he called Hadsjar-rakkabe, but which Robinson designates as Hadjr er Rukkab, *i.e.* the Knight's Rock. Later in the day, and two hours after leaving the great rock just mentioned, he reached Wadi Gharundel, then dry, but which in times of rain sends a brawling brook to the sea. There were many springs in the valley, which, although for a long time unsupplied with rain, yet on digging down from one and a half to two feet, supplied very good water—much better than that of Suez. In the neighbourhood Beduins were encamped, but not directly in the wadi. Niebuhr, following Breydenbach,[1] considered that this place must be the Elim of Scripture, with its twelve springs and its seventy palm trees, although Marah with its bitter waters comes first (Ex. xv. 23; Num. xxxiii. 9). He did not make careful inquiry after the

[1] Bernard de Breydenbach, *Opus transmarinæ peregrinationis, etc.*, ed. per Petrum Drach, civem Spirensem, A. 1502: *Caput de regressu de Monte Sinai versus Chayrum.*

name Marah, for he soon discovered that the Arabs answered every question with a yes, or pointed to the most marked locality which happened to lie the nearest. Niebuhr's further course brought him to Hammam Faroun, or Pharaoh's Baths, which we have already considered, and where the true route to Sinai may be said to commence.

The Frenchmen, Coutelle[1] and Roziere, who passed through this country in 1800, leaving Suez, passed Aijun Musa on the first day's march, and on the second, eight and a half hours beyond the Wells of Moses, reached Abu Suweirah, where Wadi Wardan meets the coast. The soil there was moist—tamarisks were seen growing; yet the water, although better than that at Aijun Musa, was not good, only one spring being really relishable. Robinson alludes probably to this latter fountain, where he speaks of finding one spring of sweet water gushing from the drift sand of Wadi Wardan. On the third day, journeying for ten hours along the coast, and crossing several wadis, yet without passing any place which bore the name of Marah, they came to Wadi Gharundel. Here there was no water, but abundant traces of the devastation caused by freshets, showing that there are times when plentiful supplies of water may be had there.

But it is to Burckhardt's observant eye that we are most indebted for a good physical sketch of a region made so interesting to us in consequence of its connection with Jewish history.

On the morning of the 25th of April 1816 he left Suez. The tide was at its flood, and he was obliged to make the entire circuit of the creek, which at low water can be forded. Riding northward for an hour and three-quarters, he passed several piles of rubbish, which are supposed to be the ruins of the ancient Colzum (Clysma or Arsinoe). He then turned eastward, just at the point where the remains of the ancient canal are distinctly visible. He then turned the point of the inlet, and halted for a short time at the wells of Aijun Musa, under the date trees. He reports that the water of these wells is copious, but that only one of them affords sweet water; and this is so often rendered muddy by the passage of Arabs, whose camels descend into the wells, that it is seldom fit to supply a provision to the traveller, much less for shipping.

[1] Coutelle, in *Descr. de l'Egypte. Et. mod.* T. ii. pp. 279–281.

Two hours and a quarter from these wells, he rested in the plain called el-Kordhye.

The next day he proceeded over a barren, sandy, and gravelly plain, called el-Ahtha, in a direction a little east of south. For about an hour he found this plain very uneven; he then entered upon a widely extended flat. Low mountains, the commencement of the chain of the Tih, run parallel with the road to the left, about eight miles distant: they are inhabited by Terabein Arabs. At the end of four hours and a half he halted in Wadi Seder (Sudr), which takes its name of wadi from the mere fact that it is overflowed with water when the rains are very copious, which, however, does not happen every year. Its natural formation by no means entitles it to be called a valley, its level being only a few feet lower than that of the desert on both sides. Some thorny trees grow in it, but no herbs for pasture. He continued his way over the plain, which was alternately gravelly, stony, and sandy. At the end of seven hours and a half he reached Wadi Wardan, a valley or bed of a torrent, similar in nature to the former, but broader. Near its extremity, at the sea-side, it is several miles in breadth. At nine hours and a half the eastern mountains form a junction with the western hills. At ten hours he entered a hilly country; at ten and three-quarters he rested for the night in a barren valley among the hills, called Wadi Amora, a place which Niebuhr did not pass. He describes the hills as consisting of chalk and silex in very irregular strata: the silex is sometimes quite black; at other times it takes a lustre and transparency much resembling agate.

On the next day he travelled over uneven hilly ground, gravelly and flinty. At an hour and three-quarters he passed the Well of Howara, round which a few date trees grow. Niebuhr travelled the same route, but his guides probably did not lead him to this well, which lies among hills, about two hundred paces out of the road. The water of this Well Howara is so bitter, according to Burckhardt, that men cannot drink it, and even camels, if not very thirsty, refuse to taste it. From Ayun Musa to the Well of Howara had been a journey of fifteen hours and a quarter. Taking this as a basis, Burckhardt thought it probable that this is the desert of three days mentioned in the Scriptures as crossed by the Israelites imme-

diately after their passing the Red Sea, and at the end of which they arrived at Marah. In moving with a whole nation, the march may well be supposed to have occupied three days; and the bitter well at Marah, which was sweetened by Moses, corresponds, according to Burckhardt, exactly with that of Howara. This, the usual route to Sinai, was, he thinks, that which the Israelites took on their escape from Egypt, provided it be admitted that they crossed the sea near Suez. There is no other road of three days' march in the way from Suez towards Sinai, nor is there any other well absolutely bitter on the whole of this coast, as far as Ras-Mohammed. The complaints of the bitterness of the water by the children of Israel, are such as may daily be heard from the Egyptian servants and peasants who travel in Arabia. Accustomed from their youth to the excellent water of the Nile, there is nothing which they so much miss and crave in countries distant from Egypt; nor is there any eastern people who feel so keenly the want of good water as the present natives of Egypt. With respect to the means asserted by some to have been used by Moses to render the waters of the well sweet, Burckhardt frequently inquired among the Beduins in different parts of Arabia, whether they possess any means of effecting such a change, by throwing wood into it, or by any other process; but he could never learn that such an art is known.

At the end of three hours he reached Wadi Gharundel, which extends to the north-east, and is almost a mile in breadth, and full of trees. The Arabs told Burckhardt that it can be traced through the whole desert, and that it begins at no great distance from el-Arish on the Mediterranean; but he was unable to verify the statement. About half an hour from the place where he halted, in a southern direction, is a copious spring with a small rivulet, which renders this valley the chief station on the route. The water is disagreeable, and if kept for a night in the water-skins, it turns bitter and spoils. Burckhardt is of opinion that, if Bir Howara is the Marah of Ex. xv. 23, then Wadi Gharundel is probably Elim, with its wells and date trees,—an opinion entertained by Niebuhr, who, however, did not see the bitter Well of Howara on the road to Gharundel. The non-existence at present of twelve wells at Gharundel, must not be considered as evidence against this conjecture, for

water can be had anywhere by digging to a very small depth, and there was an abundance of it when Burckhardt passed.

The Wadi Gharundel contains date trees, tamarisks, acacias of different species, and the thorny shrub ghawkad, the *Peganum retusum* of Forskal, which is extremely common in the Peninsula. Its small red berry is very juicy and refreshing, much resembling a ripe gooseberry in taste, but not so sweet. Burckhardt suggests that this berry may have been used by Moses to sweeten the waters of Marah. The words in Ex. xv. 25 are, "And the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." The Arabic translation of this passage Burckhardt asserts to be as follows: "And the Lord guided him to a tree, of which he threw something into the water, which then became sweet." This conjecture did not occur to him on the spot, and he did not inquire of the Beduins whether they ever sweeten the water with the juice of the berries.

The subsequent course of Burckhardt brought him to ground which I have already considered, and the extracts from his narrative may therefore cease here.

Russegger remarks[1] that the greatest waves of the Red Sea in the middle of October are found at midnight, and about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and that they coincide with the maximum oscillation of the barometer. Crossing on the fifteenth of that month, he left Suez very early in the morning, in order to take advantage of the ebb tide. He first rode an hour along the shore in a northerly direction, and then turning east, crossed the head of the arm of the sea without any difficulty. The shore was sandy, and impeded the steps of the camels greatly. When the tide is running out, and the wind sets in from the north, the same path is one of safety, which becomes one of much peril when the tide is coming in and the wind is from the south. Russegger thinks that Pharaoh ventured to expose himself to the returning tide, and perished in consequence; and strengthens his position, by citing the narrow escape of Napoleon at the same place.

Robinson's course round the head of the sea was very similar to that of Burckhardt's. His account is so accessible to the English reader, that it is only necessary to refer to it here.

[1] Russegger, *Reise*, vol. iii. p. 20.

His remark, however, "Here we glided out of Africa into Asia, without knowing the precise line of division," leads me to quote the vivid passage of von Schubert, in which he alludes to the relation of the continents at this point of their junction. Crossing from Europe into Asia, as he had done at the Bosphorus, he says that the two continents which meet there approach each other in the garb of two contestants for the prize of song, each decked in garlands of green, and extend to each other the hand of kindliness and courtesy. But Asia and Africa meet at Suez in a very different attitude and aspect. They are like naked wrestlers contending fiercely with the strokes of their hard and strong hands. At Jebel Attika, Africa approaches in all her commanding power and majesty; Asia presents herself in the nakedness of the desert and the savage outlines of the Rahah mountains just beyond. No forest, not a tree, is to be seen: nothing but the blue sea, the yellow sand of the desert, and to the north a low level strip of land marked by the faint vestiges of verdure, the neglected bed of the ancient canal.[1]

At this spot, in full view of the sea and of two continents, when the destiny of a nation freed from the yoke of slavery was placed beyond hazard, and the security of that nation made perfect, rose that glorious song of Moses and the children of Israel recorded in Ex. xv., and beginning, "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." This, too, was the spot to which the Psalmist alludes in Ps. lxxvii. 19, 20: "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

The name Shur, which seems to be applied in the Bible to the wild district extending from Suez to Ras Hummam, where the hills run down to the sea, is thought by Lord Lindsay to still survive in the word Seder or Sudr, a name now given to one of the wadis already mentioned.[2]

1 V. Schubert, *Reise*, vol. ii. p. 267.

2 Those who may wish to study the geological nature of the district, are referred to Russegger's third volume, a condensed summary of which Ritter gives, but which I omit. Since this work was written, some claims have been made for Wadi Useit as Elim; but it is not unlikely that both Gharundel and Useit, which are but three miles apart, were included under the general name of Elim.—Ed.

DISCURSION II.

THE TIH PLATEAU.

Very few accounts have yet been published of this dreary, sterile, and much avoided region; indeed, only two exist which treat of it with any degree of fulness—Seetzen's and Russegger's. They did not take the same course, but it is evident their lines of travel did not lie very remote from each other. Seetzen went from Judea to Sinai in 1807, Russegger from Sinai to Judea in 1838. The report of the former reached Europe unaccompanied by a map; whereas Russegger's not only has this want supplied, but contains full results of the measurements of heights, giving us the power of instituting very valuable and instructive generalizations.

In addition to the full narratives of Seetzen and Russegger, Henniker, an Englishman, and my friend F. A. Strauss, published in 1820 and 1845 respectively, accounts of their journeys across the Tih plateau, but these are brief and incomplete. Dr Abeken[1] has never, to my regret, published the account of his own journey, in which he has added much to our knowledge of the geographical details of this region. The accounts of other travellers are incomplete, from the fact that they have not

[1] Ritter has slightly condensed the whole of Dr Abeken's account, where the reader who wishes to study the Tih in detail will find it in conjunction with all that Strauss and Henniker, as well as Seetzen, Robinson, Russegger, and the travellers of the middle ages, have recorded respecting the et-Tih plateau. I am by no means certain that this great waste did not play a much larger part in the wanderings of the Israelites than has been the fashion of biblical geographers to accept; yet even were it so, its physical character is so simple, so free from those marked features which distinguish the other parts of the Peninsula, that it does not demand that detailed inspection which is imperative elsewhere. The condensed accounts of Ruppell and the travellers who have gone across the waste from Suez to Akaba, are sufficient to show the reader how monotonous is the general character of the district, and to convince him that here a broad sketch is more true to the theme than a portraiture of all the field. Elsewhere this is not the case. In the southern part of the Peninsula there is so much variety, that generalization and rough sketching will not suffice. The reader then gets a picture which might apply to some other district as well; but it is not so in the monotonous Tih plateau, and a sketch well drawn is the most faithful portrait.—ED.

traversed the whole of the desert, but, like Robinson, only a corner of it at most.

In speaking of the physical character of the Tih plateau, it is necessary to begin with that of the broken and romantic country at the south which adjoins it, and then proceed northward. The great granite Sinaï group of mountains forms the central kernel of the lower part of the Peninsula, and may be traced to the southernmost extremity, where it descends abruptly to the sea, and gives at once soundings of not far from a thousand feet. Thus, within a few miles, measuring in a direct line, there is an ascent from a depth of 1000 or 1200 feet below the surface of the Red Sea, to a height of about 9000 feet above its level. The chain of mountains runs off at a lower altitude both towards the north-east and the north-west, one arm accompanying the Gulf of Suez, but a considerable distance from it, and the other accompanying the Gulf of Akaba, but descending precipitously to it, leaving a scanty roadway. On the inner or continental side these ranges do not descend to the depth which we might expect, but form the rim of a plateau, not of uniform elevation indeed, but of great extent, reaching in fact from the Tih mountain wall which runs across the Peninsula in a south-easterly direction, and from which may be seen Mount Sinai, to the southern confines of Palestine, and having an elevation varying from 1000 to 4000 feet. At Abu Suweirah, north-east of Mount Sinai, a well-known spring mentioned by all travellers, the height is 4000 feet. Thence it gradually sinks towards the east, having an altitude of 2000 feet in Wadi Morra, and at el-Hudhera (Burckhardt's and Robinson's conjectural Hazeroth) 1500 feet. It continues on towards the north-east at about this altitude till the Akaba pass is reached, when the descent is abrupt to the level of the sea.

So, going northward from Sinai, there can be traced a continued plateau, which only gradually declines from its first height at Abu Suweirah, about 4000 feet, to its last, about 1000. At the high plain known as er-Ramleh, near Ain el Akhdar, the elevation is 3793 feet. At the pass through the Tih mountain wall it is 4322 feet, though at other places it would seem to reach 5000 feet. At the southernmost extremity of Wadi el Arish there is an elevation of 2832. At the well-known oasis of el-Nakhl the altitude above the sea-level is 1400

feet. The height gradually subsides till at Abdeh, or Eboda, it is about 1032 feet.

All of the territory lying south of the Haj route is called by the Arabs Ard et Tor, or the Peninsula of Tor, a true triangle, bounded by the Gulfs of Akaba and Suez on two sides; all that lies north of the Haj route is reckoned as belonging to el-Sham, or Syria. The desert of et-Tih Beni Israel, according to Isstakhri, Jakuti, and other Arabian geographers, means much more than the mere range of mountains bearing the name et-Tih, for it was thirty parasangs square; and Jebel Tih signifies, in the mouths of the present Arabs, not merely the mountain wall which crosses the Peninsula, but also the high plateau which lies north of it, and which extends to the very confines of Palestine. This monotonous country is divided into the various political divisions formed by the wild Arab tribes which live upon its inhospitable soil, and which are little known; but it has a very uniform physical character, broken only by the gradual deepening of the great wadi el-Arish, which commences not far north of the mountain range, and extends north to the Mediterranean. Near the upper part of this wadi, but not within it, lies el-Nakhl; in its lower part was the ancient Rhinococura. The stream which issued from this wadi was the "river of Egypt" mentioned in Num. xxxiv. 5, and repeatedly elsewhere in the Scriptures. It formed the south-western boundary of Canaan.

One result of Russegger's journey was the discovery of the fact that the lower part of Wadi el Arish is made up of two united smaller ones, which do not come together till they approach the sea-coast quite nearly. The eastern one of these, called by Russegger Wadi el Agaba (more correctly Akaba), begins in the eastern portion of the great Tih chain, which has been called on a preceding page Jebel Ojme, crosses the eastern half of the great plain, called by Russegger the Ojme plateau, till, arriving at the parallel of 30° 55', it bears strongly to the west and unites with the other main arm. The latter, the true Wadi el Arish, does not pass, according to Russegger's personal observation, east of el-Nakhl, as it had been thought to do, but west of it, and receives several smaller wadis, thus draining the larger part of the western portion of the plateau. This portion, according to Russegger, should bear the name of

Plateau of Jebel Tih el Beni Israel. The two wadis here mentioned, with those which are tributary to them, and which are all shallow at first and very gradual in their descent, are very different in type from those which break through the mountains along the eastern coast of the Peninsula.

From this we can understand that el-Nakhl, situated as it is between the two main wadis and on the rolling plain between them, commands the whole land. Yet, although it has lain in the route of almost every traveller who has crossed the Peninsula, whether east and west or north and south, it is plain that one of the first travellers who have examined this part of the Peninsula—Seetzen—passed six hours to the east of it.

In a march of seven days, Robinson traversed an entirely new route, leading from Akaba to the southern part of Judea, the entrance at Beersheba. No traveller had ever passed that way before; and although there was little promise of meeting any scenery but the most desolate and repulsive, still the hope of discovering some historical monuments which should throw some light on the Scriptures was sufficiently strong to cheer them on the way.[1] The first part of the journey led to no such discoveries; but after traversing a third of the distance, it was evident that the party was on the old Roman road laid down in the Peutinger Tables, and there seemed little doubt that some discoveries would be made which should justify their hopes. The expectations of Robinson and his companion were not disappointed; and among the results of the journey, not the least interesting to the student of Roman antiquities was the discovery of the important and well-preserved ruins of Elusa, now called el-Khulasah, and Eboda, now known as Abdah. In addition to these, were others scarcely less definitely marked: the Arab name was er-Ruhaibeh. The name suggested to

[1] Ritter has not availed himself of the generalizations which Robinson has incorporated in his account of the journey from Akaba to Beersheba. They may not be contained in the first edition of the *Biblical Researches*, however, which was all that was published when the *Erdkunde* was prepared. In the second there are two or three pages which are very valuable in this connection, completing the view of the eastern and north-east parts of the great central plateau. The historical monuments discovered by Robinson —Elusa, Eboda—have little interest to the biblical student, and the main value of his narrative may here be summed up in a few words. This has accordingly been done in the text.—Ed.

Robinson's mind[1] the Hebrew Rehoboth, one of Isaac's wells in the vicinity of Gerar; yet this seems to have been but a well, and there is no mention in Scripture or elsewhere of any city connected with it. Here, on the other hand, was a city, but no well, the inhabitants having been apparently supplied with rain-water by means of cisterns. Robinson thinks, too, that the position of Isaac's well was much farther north, and between Gerar and Beersheba, where he was residing. Hitzig, however, has happily conjectured that Gerar had a larger meaning than Robinson ascribes to it, and that it extended southward for a considerable distance into the wilderness, as far indeed as any pasturage was found. Robinson was never able to solve the mystery resting upon this place, notwithstanding a careful scrutiny of all historical records which could throw light upon it.

At this collection of ruins, called Ruhaibeh, is the great point from which the roads across the desert, after having been all united, again diverge towards Gaza and Hebron. Thence to Hebron is a two days' journey.

From Akaba to Hebron and Gaza, one road passes along nearly the whole length of the great Wadi el Araba, and ascends from it to the high western plateau by several passes not far from the south end of the Dead Sea. From Akaba to Ruhaibeh[2] there are two roads for a part of the way: one the route taken by Robinson; and the other, keeping for some time along the Araba, and then ascending through the pass called Wadi el Beyanah, joining the other before reaching the southern spur of the mountains which extend through the whole north-easterly part of the plateau. This lower eminence is known as Jebel Araif. It was evident to Robinson's mind that the Israelites could not have passed westward of this range, of which Jebel Araif forms the southern termination; for such a course would have brought them directly to Beersheba, and not to Kadesh, which latter city lay near to the border of Edom.

[1] *Biblical Researches*, i. 197.

[2] Notwithstanding the strong argument brought by Robinson that Ruhaibeh was a city and not a well, and that the people were evidently supplied with water from cisterns, many authorities have accepted, in the rash way only too common, what he only suggests to disprove, and give the name Rehoboth to the place. See, for instance, Riess, *Bibel Atlas*, 1864. —ED.

From the convent of Sinai, and consequently from the southern extremity of the Peninsula, three roads cross by the three great passes of Jebel et Tih, and unite before reaching Ruhaibeh. The easternmost passes by el-Ain, and falls into Robinson's route near Jebel Araif. The middle road crosses the Tih by the pass el-Mureikhy; the western one by the pass el-Rakineh. These two unite before reaching the Haj route, and fall into Robinson's road, about a day's journey south of Ruhaibeh. It runs about six hours east of the fortress el-Nakhl, as far as Seetzen could ascertain. These roads all lie, therefore, east of Wadi el Arish. There is a side road, however, running along the western side of the Arish, crossing it far to the south, and leaving Ruhaibeh at some distance to the right. This would seem to be the route taken by the pilgrims who travelled in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from Gaza to Mount Sinai.

It would appear, therefore, that the middle of the plateau is occupied by a long central basin, extending from Jebel et Tih to the shores of the Mediterranean, descending toward the north with a rapid slope, and drained through all its length by the Wadi el Arish [or rather by the two branches of this wadi], which enters the sea near the place of the same name. West of this basin, other wadis run by themselves down to the sea. On the east of the same central basin is another similar and parallel one, between it and the Araba, extending northward from the Tih range nearly to Jebel Araif, and drained throughout by the important Wadi el Jarafeh, which enters the Wadi Araba not far from el-Mukrah. North of this last basin, the tract between the Araba and the basin of the Arish is filled up with ranges or clusters of mountains; from which, on the east, short wadis run to the Araba, and on the west larger ones to Wadi el Arish, until farther north these latter continue by themselves to the sea nearer Gaza.

Comparing now this formation of the northern desert with the notices already given respecting the region about Sinai, we get a more distinct view of the country as a whole. If the parallel of the northern coast of Egypt be extended eastward to the great Wadi el Araba, it appears that the desert south of this parallel rises gradually towards the south, until on the summit of the ridge et-Tih, between the Gulfs of Suez and

Akaba, it attains, according to Russegger, the elevation of 4322 feet. The waters of all this great tract flow off northwards either to the Mediterranean or the Dead Sea. The Tih forms a sort of offset; and along its southern base the surface sinks at once to the height of only about 3000 feet, forming the sandy plain which extends nearly across the Peninsula. After this the mountains of the Peninsula proper commence, and rise rapidly through the formations of sandstone, greenstone, porphyry, and granite, into the lofty elevations of St Catherine and Um Shaumer; the former of which has an elevation of more than eight thousand Paris feet, or nearly double that of the Tih.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEDUIN TRIBES OF THE SINAI PENINSULA AND OF THE DESERT OF JEBEL TIH, OR OF ARABIA PETRÆA.

THE ARAB ET-TUR, *i.e.* THE SOUTHERN; AND THE ARAB EL-SHAM, *i.e.* THE NORTHERN TRIBES OF ARABS.

BEFORE we leave the territory of the Sinai Peninsula, and advance by the way of Akaba to el-Ghor and the Dead Sea, and enter Palestine, we must cast a glance at the present and the past condition of man as we find him in these desert wastes; we must look at these wandering Arabs, and try to make out that connection which we invariably find to exist between every country and its inhabitants. It does not at first view promise much entertainment: the habits of wild and vagrant men are not very attractive, for we see in them very few marks of past progress, very little of development within what we may call their national life, and very little power of touching other men with stimulus, and adding to the spread of an external civilisation. Still there are not wholly wanting traces of a rudimental capacity of unfolding to what is better; and we might know of more, were not the accounts which we possess of those tribes so meagre. It is to be hoped that a class of observant tourists will yet arise, who will not content themselves with merely repeating what has been said a hundred times before, but who will in such matters as that now in hand conduct their inquiries in such a way as to contribute something to the stock of human knowledge. Tourists ought to explore new fields, and to correct the faulty observations of those who have gone before them. I shall in this chapter indicate what has already been ascertained regarding the Arab character, in order to call attention mainly

to what has been left unexplored, that sagacious travellers may in future know what is desirable yet to investigate in this direction.

C. H. Volney is one of the few competent observers who have entered this field, and have proved themselves equal to the task of portraying the connection between land and people; but he lived in the last century, when this subject was as yet not rated by any one at its full worth. Yet he has given us a clear insight into the Beduin character as it exhibited itself before the new Frank epoch in Egypt, before the Wahabe epoch in Nejd, and at the time of the Turkish weakness in Syria and Egypt. That was the halcyon day of the Arabs: they carried on their plundering operations on caravans far more extensive and valuable than traverse the Sinai Peninsula now, when the Mohammedan fanaticism is weakened, and the prospect of gain at Mecca is less than it was; and when, moreover, the vigorous hand of the Egyptian pasha holds a smarting lash over the wild Arab tribes, and keeps them in a subjection which is to the great advantage of those travellers who have occasion now to traverse the land.

Volney learned in Gaza, at the close of the last century, the value of the wealth often accumulated during the marauding expeditions of the Arabs, when a race of so predatory nature as theirs, and one so addicted to receiving stolen goods as the Turks, was so fully alive to the advantages to be gained. But since his day, the courses of trade have taken other channels, and the plundering propensities of the Arabs have been driven to another field. Meantime they have become poorer, while their propensities have increased commensurately with the decrease of the domain to which they have to restrict themselves.

The return of the yearly pilgrimage from Cairo across the desert, as well as from Damascus by way of Maan, near Petra, was the means of supplying the Arab tribes with a more regulated supply of food, and with a more stated and reliable means of occupation. The wild rovers who used to infest the neighbourhood of Gaza, now found a new occupation as guides and camel-drivers, and as the bearers of dates, oil, and meal for the use of pilgrims who needed them during their four days' march over Wadi Musa, the ancient Petra. These travellers from the north also proved good customers in purchasing the accumu-

lated stores which had been the fruit of previous plunderings from the caravans of travelling merchants. But Gaza became the chief depot of stolen goods, and, as Volney wittily said, was likely to become a more productive source of wealth than even the mines of Peru. The amount seized in the year 1750 in the plundering on the Hadj of more than twenty thousand camel-loads, is not within computation.

Still the Arabs knew nothing of the worth of what they seized, and sold the most costly Cashmere shawls, Indian muslins, Persian stuffs, coffee, and other valuables, for a few piastres. An Anasch Beduin, who had in a plundering expedition obtained some pearls, supposed them to be some kind of white bean, and cooking them for his dinner, and not finding them grow soft so fast as he wished, was just on the point of throwing them away, when a Gaza merchant who was passing bought them with a bit of red cloth. The plundering of a caravan in 1779, in which a nobleman of St Germain was travelling, was extremely profitable to the Arabs. By the seizing of a caravan in 1784, coffee became so abundant in Palestine that the price fell one-half; and it would have become still cheaper had not the aga forbidden the traffic in it altogether, purchasing it all himself,—a movement so much to his advantage, that it yielded him in one year more than eighty thousand piastres. Of course, under such circumstances, there was no inducement for the leading men to attempt to check the marauding expeditions of the Beduins. The Arabs and their sheikhs, who were continually growing more and more cunning, always had their share liberally allowed them out of the results of their crafty and violent dealings with travellers: the Aga of Gaza, for example, who was appointed at the cost of the Sultan to the express work of conveying the "faithful," used to devote one-half of the three thousand camel-loads which were pledged to their use to his own private necessities. It was so in the seventeenth century likewise. But now all this is changed: the Wahabis have indeed a kind of magazine for their stolen goods at Deraijeh, and there are miniature Gazas scattered here and there; yet they are of little account, and the old order of things is virtually done away. Travellers are now taken under the escort of sheikhs personally pledged to their safe conduct.

Among modern tourists, the most have only spoken of the Arabs as they have themselves come in contact with them: very few have, like Seetzen, Burckhardt, Ruppell, Robinson, paid any strict attention to their more general peculiarities, which indeed are very difficult to grasp, in the constant shifting of their places of abode, in their utter indifference to numbers and chronology, and in the want of any central point where they can be studied, and which may be regarded as the centre of their culture and the mirror of their history. Only the harbour of Tor and the convent of Sinai could have yielded any information regarding their change from age to age, their numbers, their outgoings and incomings, the numbers of persons visiting their country, and the like; and these only if there had been observers stationed at those points willing and competent to take notice of such things.

An accurate knowledge of all these data would be invaluable to us now, in enabling us to solve many perplexing questions, and more especially in dealing with the difficult problem, how in the most ancient times hundreds of thousands could have had a subsistence there, where, according to Volney, it would be impossible now for more than five or six thousand at the highest to procure the means of life. We have already indicated in another place the condition of this country in earlier times, and shown how widely different it was from what it is at present. There was, it is evident, a growth both of the larger sorts of trees and of smaller shrubs, of which we have no remnant; there was also a large number of plants which might contribute in part to the sustenance of Israel during the journey; there was a universally distributed agriculture, as we learn from the existence of mines and from the oldest Egyptian habitations, as well as from the Christian monuments which are everywhere found—cloisters, hermitages, walls, gardens, and fountains; and lastly, there is an evident possibility that there was a much greater supply of water in the wadis, more abundant rainstorms, and the possibility of economizing the supplies thus gained by the use of the same appliances which were common elsewhere in countries similarly situated and conditioned.

These circumstances taken together, and in connection with the inscriptions of Sinai and Serbal, those of the Wadi Mokkateb, and those scattered in the most careless profusion over a hundred

other places, and, in short, over all the high rocks of the central mountain range, clearly prove how numerous the early population of the Peninsula must have been, and would have showed it plainly enough even if we did not know of the existence there of four different tribes prior to the crossing of Israel—the Amalekites, the Midianites, the Ishmaelites, and in the east the Edomites. These races all lived there, and had habitations which they were ready to defend with arms; and even if we put the lowest estimate made by any upon their number, still it will be one far removed from insignificance. We cannot judge at all, from the deserted appearance of the country to-day, what it may once have been. There is so much owing to the indolence and neglect of man, that we cannot tell by a glance at the surface of a country what its intrinsic capacities may be. Least of all can we determine such a question in the land now under our discussion, where the speculations of men have had a wide range, and where the course of history has been so peculiarly shaped by Providence for mysterious ends. It is enough to say, that this land was not originally meanly endowed by the Creator.

So far as pertains to a more exact and critical knowledge of the Arab tribes, then, it must be said that we are only in the infancy of our knowledge, although within the past few decades much new information has been brought to us. How comparatively unimportant, for example, are the communications of that admirable and sagacious observer, Carsten Niebuhr, so far as they relate to the Beduins of the Sinai Peninsula! for in his day the tyranny which they exercised was so excessive, that he was not permitted to ascend Sinai, nor to look upon the ruins of the ancient city in Wadi Feiran, where travellers of our day may travel with all the ease and safety and freedom of research which they may have in any part of the earth. Niebuhr tells us[1] that he came in contact with only three small tribes, the Leghat, Sanâbha, and Saiid, who lived on the road from Suez to Sinai, and were in the habit of accompanying pilgrims to the holy places. They seemed to him to be Rajas, *i.e.* small tribes in subjection to some greater one. He supposed the open level country of the Peninsula to belong to the wandering independent Arabs, with whom he never came in contact.

[1] Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien*, pp. 399-403.

The operations of the Europeans[1] in Egypt in carrying out their political designs, were indirectly the means of a great accession to our knowledge of the Arab tribes. Since that time Seetzen[2] has visited the country, and given us more information than all his predecessors had conferred. He was followed by Burckhardt, who directed his attention very much to Arab life, customs, and peculiarities, and by mastering the language, and travelling through the country for many years under the disguise and title of the Sheikh Ibrahim, was able to penetrate further into the Arab manner of thought than any other man has yet done, and to confer an inestimable favour upon us, by giving us the clearest and fullest account in existence of the ethnography of the Arab races. The opportunities of both Seetzen and Burckhardt were largely improved by the political circumstances of the times in which they travelled. Seetzen was in the country during the period when the Wahabites had sway, and Burckhardt at the time when the wild tribes were very much held in subjection by the energetic hand of the Viceroy of Egypt; and they were both enabled to penetrate to places which otherwise had been inaccessible. Their labours have pushed our ethnographical knowledge of the country a full stadium forward. Doubtless much that we have from these and other sources is hypothetical; much needs to be confirmed by more testimony. But yet we know enough of the Arab character, to pronounce with certainty that there is a fixed status in it—there is not only a nationality discernible, but there are also moral principles; that even in what seems at first view to be the wildest form of life, a mere predatory and utterly unscrupulous vagabondage, there are the seeds of progress, the fundamental germs of fixedness, of righteousness, of respect for obligation, in short, of civilisation; that there are the beginnings of what must exist in a more or less advanced stage, wherever relations between man and man have any fixedness whatever; that we cannot, excepting with great injustice, im-

[1] Coutelle, *Mœurs et Usages des Arabes de Tor*, in *Descr. de l'Egypte Etat Moderne*, tom. ii. pp. 296–304; Amédée Jaubert, *Nomenclature des Tribus des Arabes qui campent entre l'Egypte et la Palestine*, pp. 250–275; Volney and others.

[2] Seetzen, *über arabische Tribus*, in v. Zach's *Mon. Corresp.* vol. xix. 1819, pp. 106–133, 213–233.

pute an utterly unredeemed barbarousness to the Arab of the Sinai Peninsula, any more than we can to the Arab of the great Peninsula; and that his present character has in it traces of that same humanity and culture that we know it had in the remotest times, in the days of Ishmael, of Edom, of Amalek, of Midian (for example, see the account of Jethro, Ex. xviii. 14–23), notwithstanding that in a certain sense, as we use language to-day, Ishmael, the progenitor of the inhabitants of Petra, is spoken of (Gen. xvi. 12, xxv. 12–18) as a "wild man."

Besides the few Christian inhabitants of the Peninsula, who dwell in the narrow tract around the Tor, the harbour of the country, and around the convent at Sinai, we have three classes of Arabs to discriminate: 1. The Jebalije, whom we have already seen to be the humble crouching servants at the convent; 2. The Fellahs (Fellahin in the plural), or the cultivators of the soil — the most permanent class, not respected by the Beduins, but ground down by them, and treated with constant severity; 3. The Beduins (Bedawi), who proudly call themselves the independent masters of the land, and deny every stranger the right of treading on their soil, and drinking of their wells, till he has placed himself under their protection.

The last, by far the most numerous, and the real lords of the land, are subdivided into two great bodies, those of the North and those of the South; this geographical distinction having a root lying deeper than that which appears to arise from local situation, but to be radical, to designate different epochs of immigration into the country, and different races. But upon this question we shall not be able to come to an absolute decision till philologists shall have pursued their investigations further into the various dialects in use upon the Peninsula. Thus far, however, we are able approximately to subdivide the Beduins into these two great classes:—

1. The Beni et Tûr, the sons of et-Tûr or Tôr, *i.e.* the central mountain land of the Peninsula (but not those clustered around the harbour Tôr), are the inhabitants of the Sinai district proper, south of the Tih range, and are known under the various names of Turoniani (Brocardus, thirteenth century), Towara (Burckhardt), and Táwarah (Robinson), the singular being Tûry. These all seem to be one great class, subdivided again into various tribes.

2. The Beni el Sham are the inhabitants of the northern portion of the country, extending northward from the Tih ranges as far as Syria (Sham). These have no general or class name as the Towara have, yet among them we have the Tihahoh, *i.e.* the dwellers on the Tih mountains and plateau, who are the best known—the Bteiahah of Seetzen—and who are not subdivided again into tribes. Near them we find others who are evidently of the same general stock, such as the Azazimeh, Heïwat, Terabin, Saideyeh, who extend over the whole northern face of the land as far as Syria. To these we must add the more easterly inhabitants of the Peninsula, the dwellers in Araba, in the Jebel Shera and the Ghor, whom we generally designate as the tribes of Edom.

DISCURSION I.

THE JEBALIJE—THE TRIBUTARIES OF THE CONVENT.

To what we have already said about the Arabs who come under this general designation, we have but little here to add. Since the time when they were nominally Christian, and were attached to the convent as Christian servants, they have become Mohammedans, and are entirely under Mohammedan subjection.[1] They themselves acknowledge the Christian descent, and are consequently spoken scornfully of by the other Arabs as the "sons of the Nazarenes." They cannot marry into other tribes on account of this same reproach, although in their whole manner of life no difference can be traced between them. The Jebalije can therefore only intermarry among themselves. Their number is small: in Burckhardt's time they could only put a hundred and twenty armed men into the field. Coutelle,[2] who wrote in 1800, gives the number as a hundred and thirty-five, and says that they are subdivided into five tribes.

Ruppell[3] tells us, that at his time there were only eighty-two names enrolled at the convent as entitled to receive any

[1] See Burckhardt, *Trav. in Syria*, p. 562 et seq.; also Gesenius, ii. pp. 902–904.

[2] Coutelle, *Observat.* in *Descr. de l'Egypte Et. mod.* T. ii. p. 303.

[3] Ruppell, *Reise in Nubien*, 1829, p. 194.

bounty at the hands of the monks. Schimper[1] tells us that the Jebalije may be distinguished from the other Arabs of the Peninsula by their features and complexion, and ascribes the cause of this to their intermixture with Berbers (Magrebi, who, as pilgrims or as Egyptian troops, often cross the Peninsula). Burckhardt, on the contrary, speaks of the remarkable beauty of these Arabs, and says that their daughters are the fairest of the land,—a circumstance which gives rise to many romantic adventures with the other Arabian tribes.

In spite of their dishonoured position as pseudo-Beduins, they are strong and hardy; and in their stated employment, as servants of the convent, bringing water, wood, and coal, tilling the garden, and doing all the out-of-door work, they are active and capable, although there are not lacking idlers among them. They have for their labour one-half of the harvest, and also enjoy the privilege of escorting all travellers to the top of the sacred mount. Still the latter right is not enjoyed by them, in point of fact, to the full; for they have for a long time been joined in the closest alliance with the tribe of Korashy (Koreysh), a branch of the Szowaleha, who have no prescriptive claim to conduct travellers, but who are admitted to a share in the privilege. The lot of the poor Jebalije is a hard one, for they have to work hard in the service of the monks, and are sometimes reduced to the bitterest need.

Robinson cites the assertion[2] of the superior of the convent, that the Jebalije might be beaten, sold, and even put to death by him; and that there is no difference in appearance between them and other Arabs. The superior stated that he supplied them with barley, and also with bread, and that this gave them a more vigorous look and more ample proportions than the other tribes, who have the aspect of men much pinched for want of food. He also stated that there are from fifteen hundred to two thousand souls who are thus dependent on the convent for the means of life. In the year before Robinson's visit, some had received Christian baptism.

Henniker,[3] while at Sorbat el Chadem, and therefore a long way from the convent, saw an Arab sleeping under the

[1] W. Schimper, *Arab. Reise*, MS.

[2] Robinson, *Pal.* i. p. 223, and *Observ.* xviii. pp. 432–437.

[3] Fr. Henniker, *Notes l.c.* p. 244.

trees, with nothing near him but a bag of charcoal. His own attendants went by without touching it; and on inquiry he learned that the sleeper was one of the Arabs attached to the convent, and that he was on his way to exchange the coal for corn at Cairo. This Jebalije evidently had the same duties imposed upon him which De Suchem formerly ascribed to the Laici, whom we, taking Robinson's[1] view, have considered elsewhere as the Jebalije, and among whom there were once, it is probable, many Christians.

DISCURSION II.

THE ARAB ET TUR OR BENI ET TUR, THE TOWARA OR TAWARH OF THE SINAI PENINSULA.

The earliest description of this great southern group of Beduins, to whom Sir John Maundeville, writing[2] in the middle of the fourteenth century, gives the name of Bedoynes and Ascopardes, we find in the celebrated Brocardus (Burchard), who wrote in the thirteenth century, and who called them Turoniani, as well as Madianites (Midianites) and Beduins. He has been followed by almost all authors up to the most recent times. The name is unquestionably derived, not, as Volney has conjectured, from Tor, the harbour, but from the central mountain chain which bears that name.

The Towara (Tûry in the singular according to Robinson) do not form a single people, but are divided into five leading tribes, which again are subdivided into still smaller groups. The five tribes are very similar in numbers and in general appearance; and in case of any attack, either by the Arabs of the north or by any foreign force, they instantly combine and form a single army. The Towara lay claim to all the Peninsula lying south of the line of the Hadj from Suez to Akaba, but in fact they hold only what is south of the Tih mountains. The district north of the Tih plateau is not held by the Tihyahah, however, but by a number of tribes in alliance, the men of which are stronger and more hardy than the Towara, and have no close amicable relations with them.

[1] Robinson, *Pal.* i. p. 212, Not. 2 and 225.

[2] Halliwell, *The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville, etc.*, London 1839, viii. ch. vi. p. 63.

The five leading tribes of the Towara bear these names: 1. Szowaleha; 2. Aleygat; 3. El-Mezeine; 4. Ulad Soleiman; and 5. Beni Wassel.

1. The Szowaleha (Sawâlihah, Robinson; Soelhe, Ruppell; Saualhe, Lepsius). This is the largest of all, and boasts of being the first that settled in the land. They can be traced historically back to the Jedham, who were in Mohammed's time the well-known inhabitants of Madian, on the east side of what is now the Gulf of Akaba. They seem to have entered the Sinai Peninsula somewhere between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. If we can ascribe any historical foundation to Mohammed's words, "Welcome are the ancestors of the wife of Moses; welcome the race of Shoaib" (*i.e.* Jethro), it would be certain that they are directly connected with the fate of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 27, 28), and with the marriage of Moses to the daughter of their priest Jethro (Ex. ii. 15, xviii. 14–23), as well as with the later fortunes of Israel (Num. xxx.). In the time of the greatest Mohammedan prosperity they were a cultivated and powerful people, far in advance of their descendants, as is manifested by the monuments of that time which remain, sparsely met with, it is true, yet satisfactorily exhibiting marks of what the Towara attained to after taking possession of the central mountain land of Sinai.

We learn that the terms Ishmaelites and Midianites were often used interchangeably, to indicate the descendants of Abraham by the side lines of Hagar and Keturah (Gen. xxxvii. 27, 28; Judg. viii. 10, 21–27); and it appears that they were divided into twelve tribes. It will be recollected by the reader, that the present Towara, in contradistinction to the Tihyahah, are subdivided into tribes: among the Tihyahah no such division has ever been detected. The wise counsel which Jethro gave to Moses (Ex. xviii. 21–23), not to bear alone the whole burden of judging, but to appoint able men over thousands and over hundreds, over fifties and over tens, and only himself to decide in cases of the greatest importance, seems to have been drawn from his own experience; and even now we find the sheikhs of the special tribes of the Towara subordinate to one sheikh superior. We find in the case of Joshua (Num. xxvii. 21), that the first place in Israel was given at the death of Moses, not to his son, but to a military chieftain outside of

his own kindred; but we find the place of supreme power among the apparent descendants of the Midianites is hereditary, and is held by a single small tribe, the Owareme.

It is perfectly evident from the history of Joseph, that from the remotest times the Midianites transported on camels the products of the East to Egypt; and it is the Towara now who claim the same right: they insist on monopolizing the escorting of travellers and of carrying goods, and contend even to blood with those who infringe upon their claims.

The subdivisions of the Szowaleha inhabiting the district mainly west and north-west of the convent, Burckhardt gives as four: 1. Ulad Said (Aulad Said, Robinson; Wellad Said, Lepsius); 2. Korashy (Kurrâshy, Robinson); 3. Owareme (Awarimeh, Robinson; Auarmi, Lepsius); and 4. Rahamy.

(1.) The Ulad Said, whose hospitality Burckhardt praised, are not so poor as the other tribes; they are in possession of the best lands; their sheikh is the second in rank among all the Towara. There are three subdivisions of this tribe—the Seheri, Saidi, and Retesi.

(2.) The Korashy (variously spelled by travellers). This seems to be a tribe which once came from the Hejas, and which was not affiliated at the outset in blood with the Towara, but which has at length become thoroughly blended with them. Their late sheikh Sâleh was the first sheikh of the Peninsula. They seem to be out of favour at the convent; but under the powerful administration of their leader, they have long negotiated all bargains for safe conduct across the country. Schimper tells us that there are two subdivisions recognised among them.

(3.) The Owareme. This tribe is very small, numbering but about forty able-bodied men. It is remarkable for this fact, that in it the office of military leader of the whole Towara is hereditary. This tribe is proud of its long possession of the country, and boasts of being the first to settle on the Peninsula.

(4.) The Rahamy, of whom we know very little, save that they are very few in number, scarcely reckoning more than ten families. Burckhardt could learn no particulars about them: Robinson seems to doubt their existence.

These various tribes, to which Schimper adds a few subordinate ones, possess and occupy all the best places west and

north-west of the convent. These places are common to all the tribes; but the spots where the date palm grows are the property of private individuals. As they stand in the close alliance of kindred stock, they intermarry freely; and they have one locality in the middle of Wadi Sheikh specially sacred to the celebration of their various festivals.

2. The Aleygat (Burckhardt), Aliekat (Robinson), Leghat (Niebuhr, Coutelle, and Seetzen), Alekati (Ruppell), Alekat (Lepsius), the second leading tribe among the Towara, is much smaller in number than the Szowaleha, enrolling but about a hundred armed men, according to the best authorities, but so closely allied with the Mezeine, having their encampments in common, as to form a power equal to that of the above-mentioned tribe. They seem to be an ancient tribe, and may possibly on this account be reckoned as among the protectors, or ghafirs, of the convent. Intermarriages with other tribes seldom occur among them.

Burckhardt discovered a nomadic branch of this tribe on the Nile, in Nubia, a day's journey north of Deir. The Aleygat of Sinai know perfectly well of the existence of this branch, but did not know of its history, and the reason of its colonization. The name of this tribe seems to have a commemoration in the valley of Aleiat or Aleiyat. They appear to dwell in the region between the Wadi Nasb and the Wadi Gharundel, and also to the north-east, through the little known Wadi Wutah, as far as the base of the Jebel Tih. They seem to have come originally from the more easterly part of the desert, and have attained to any political importance only within very recent times.

At the period when Ruppell prosecuted his researches in the country, the Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmed Ali, in pursuing his policy of *divide et impera*, had subsidized two sheikhs—one of them the distinguished Salih of the Korashy, the other always chosen from the Aleygat—as mediators between himself and all the Beduins. This exposed the Aleygat chieftain to universal hatred; and as the sheikhs enjoy great consideration among the tribes, and are the judges, although they have no executive power, the vote of a sheikh having no more weight than that of any other man, this movement was supposed to imply the subjection of the whole Arab race to the viceroy's

sway. The energetic ruler of Egypt gradually extended his power over Syria and the Hejas, and would not tolerate the predatory excursions of these Arab tribes. But instead of pursuing an exterminating war against them, recognising that the root of the evil lay in their penury, and consequent hunger, he found the most easy solution of the difficulty in pensioning them, pledging to give to each of a certain number of their armed men six Egyptian para (about three farthings English) a day, provided they would abstain from all acts of violence to caravans passing through the land. His constantly increasing power gave him, after this, sufficient security for the fulfilment of their promise. Indeed, ere long, he felt himself strong enough to insist upon their submission, and yet to withhold his allowance, and for years it remained unpaid. Upon this the Arabs reverted to their old habits of plundering; and on one occasion they had the audacity to capture one of the viceroy's own caravans, and one of great size, near Suez. Before they were taken, the plunder was sold in Syria; but they were compelled to yield, and to pay a heavy tribute in the form of charcoal. After that they were taken back under the protection of Egypt, and their plundering has largely ceased. Not wholly, however; for Seetzen found traces of a recent marauding expedition when he passed through the country.

3. The Mezeine, Muzeiny (Robinson), Misene (Ruppell), Mizéne (Lepsius), the third main tribe of the Towara, have come recently to the Peninsula, and are looked down upon with great scorn. No other tribe is permitted to intermarry with them. In fact, this matter of liberty of intermarrying, is the manner in which the Arabs signify their regard for other tribes, or their hatred of them.

The Szowaleha and the Aleygat were continually in strife at an early period; and during the continuance of their quarrels, four families of the powerful tribe of the Mezeine in the Hejas, fleeing from the consequences of a deed of blood, took refuge in the Sinai Peninsula. They were received not on equal terms, but as vassals, and a tribute of sheep was exacted of them yearly. This their haughty spirit would not brook; and taking a bold and independent stand, and laying claim to a portion of the country, the Aleygat received them as allies, and made them serviceable in their wars with the

Szowaleha. A contest of forty years continued after the junction of the Mezeine with the Aleygat, till at last it was ended with one of the bloodiest battles ever fought in the country, the victory remaining on the side of the allies. The two armies then divided their lands equally, and the Aleygat gave a third of their half to the Mezeine as a reward for their faithful service. At the same time, the sheikh of the Szowaleha was appointed sheikh superior of the whole Peninsula.

Since that time the Mezeine have become a larger tribe than the Aleygat, and each of them is now about the same size with the Szowaleha. They possess that portion of the eastern side of the Peninsula which is claimed by the Towara, including the whole western coast of the Gulf of Akaba, from its extremity at the town of Akaba to Ras Mohammed. The southern stations, Sherm, Dahab, and Nuweibi, are their leading villages, and fishing their chief occupation. They have no relations of special intimacy with the convent. The Aleygat, their old allies, have, on the other hand, withdrawn more to the western part of the Peninsula. Traces of the old relation between them are still manifest in the united right of escort possessed by the Aleygat and the Mezeine in the neighbourhood of Sherm, and in the common possession of the date groves there.

Ruppell, Lindsay, and other travellers, have given us accounts of the collision of the Arab tribes over questions of escort. It sometimes happens that the Szowaleha undertake, for the sake of the money, to convoy tourists all the way to Akaba; but this gives great offence, and has in one case convulsed the Peninsula with war.

4. The Ulad Soleiman, Beni Selman (Burckhardt), Aulâd Suleimân (Robinson), Weled Suleiman (Lepsius), form the fourth great subdivision of the Towara. They appear to be reduced to a very few families, living at the harbour of Tor, and in various localities along the Wadi el Sheikh. Repeated wars with the combined Szowaleha and Aleygat threatened to absolutely annihilate them; and Lepsius, who was in the country in 1846, supposed them to be then extinct,—a fate, it may be remarked in passing, which also seems in store for the Htim, *i.e.* Hutemi, a fishing tribe on the Gulf of Akaba.

Burckhardt discovered some remnants of the Ulad Solei-

man clustering around the harbour of Tor: they claim for themselves, with some pride, the first settlement of the country. This may be the same tribe which Pococke erroneously connected, deceived by the name, with Solomon, and which he also supposed to descend from the ancient Midianite inhabitants of the country. In the latter conclusion I agree with him, but place it on altogether different grounds from him, as will be seen from my remarks a few pages back regarding all the Towara tribes.

Schimper, who was brought intimately into contact with these people in the course of his botanical researches, speaks of another small tribe which he calls el-Badera, inhabiting the neighbourhood of Tor, and numbering about forty armed men. These, he says, are not genuine Arabs, but immigrants from Mount Hor, the grave of Aaron, the ancient Edom, and the present Jebâl. They live in a place called Jebele, an hour's distance south-east of Tor, and have date vineyards, practise agriculture, and a rude kind of navigation, chiefly as pilots. This is probably the same tribe mentioned by Ruppell, and called by him Haterie.

5. The Beni Wassel or Wasel, who form the fifth tribe of the Towara, number but a few families: only fifteen in Burckhardt's time, and only two or three when Lepsius passed; they are therefore plainly dying out. They live scattered among the Mezeine, in the neighbourhood of Sherm. They are also found in Upper Egypt, and seem to have come originally from Barbary.

In the time of the great Mohammedan conquest, or somewhat later, in the seventh or eighth century, the whole Peninsula of Sinai seems to have been in the possession of Christian monks, and of the tribe of Ulad Soleiman. The Szowaleha and Aleygat were at one time living in Egypt, on the most eastern district of the Delta; and it is probable that they oscillated between that region and the desert, driven to and fro according to the greater or less fertility of Egypt. In times of scarcity along the Nile, they could betake themselves to their wild robber life; and, so far as mere vegetation is concerned, they could draw more sustenance from the aromatic shrubs which their own hills bear, than from the luxuriant and succulent plants of the Nile valley. Yet, when the Egyptian grain harvest was abundant, it was

altogether preferable to the really meagre supplies of their own country. In their return to Arabia they came into collision with the Ulad Soleiman, and probably with the Christian population of the Peninsula. The Ulad Suleiman seem, so far as our records show, to have been the aboriginal settlers; they came into hostile collision with the Szowaleha, and were never on so friendly terms as would allow them to be blended. They must not, therefore, although apparently Midianitic in origin, be confounded with tribes whose origin we have already traced beyond the Gulf of Akaba. The dying out of the Ulad Soleiman will probably preclude the settlement of the primitive origin of the tribe, and leave the question in an unsettled state. We have now no reason to doubt that they are aboriginal in the land.

The Towara or Táwara (Tury in the singular) are among the very poorest of all the Beduins; the want of rain, and hence of pasturage, reducing them to very great straits. They have small and lean flocks, and few camels. Neither of the two sheikhs who, in Burckhardt's time, were the richest among them, possessed more than eight: of tents, the wealthiest had no more than two: often two or three Beduins had but one camel in common, and some had none. Horses were not known among them; asses, to a certain extent, took their place; the camel had to do the whole work of transportation. Their meagre living was gained by transporting goods between Suez, Cairo, and Akaba, and by trafficking a little in gum-arabic, dates, and fruit: from Cairo they procured corn and vegetables; and when they got a superfluity of these, they exchanged them at Sherm for a few sheep or goats, these animals being brought thither from the Arabian coast opposite.

The scorn which every roving Beduin feels towards the fellah who has a fixed habitation, is displayed towards all steady agricultural employment. A very slight degree of enterprise and industry would secure an increase of date-palms, in the neighbourhood of springs at least; but the care of such a matter as this is left entirely to the gardeners and the fellahs. The Beduins do not even labour to secure a continuance of trees in their country, although they are continually burning them for charcoal, and reducing the number so much, that a great want of wood is imminent. Their indolence, even with all the

activity of their vagabond life, is so great, that they do not take the trouble to braid the date-palm rope with which their camels are tied, the material for which is abundant: they do not weave the palm-mats which they need to cover themselves with. The women, too, only spin just cloth enough out of camel and goats' hair to make a single tent, and barely clothing enough for a single family; and even were they rich enough to possess two camels each, they would hardly do it, on account of the trouble which the loading and the unloading of the second one would entail. The Beduin has more wives, in all probability, than camels; and in case he has but one, she must take a part of the poor camel's duty, and become herself a beast of burden.

This vagabond, careless, nomad life has engendered among these wild sons of the desert, who so heartily despise all quiet settlement, one good result, namely, their hospitality to foreigners, —a quality which indeed is essential to their sustenance, and the only virtue, says Ruppell, which the ambition of the Beduin drives him to practise. Their hospitality they practise among themselves; and even the tribes most held in degradation, the despised Jebalije, seek to make themselves honourable by the practice of it. The great destitution of the Arabs compels them in every part of their country to expect a present in return for their hospitality, even though it be but slight; and of this they make no secret. Thus their one virtue is only, when closely looked into, a means of livelihood; and with more circulation of money, and a stronger desire of making regular gains, it would assume the open form of traffic, as it does among civilised nations. We have proof enough that the apparently disinterested hospitality which the Beduins display is not the fruit of a thoroughly bountiful nature. The Arabs who live in the neighbourhood of the harbour of Tor talk much about the liberality of former visitors, in order to increase the largesses which those who now pass through their district may bestow; and they often complain, and perhaps with some reason, of the scanty driblet which falls to them. But the stern laws of hospitality are often the source of no little annoyance. Ruppell tells us that the freedom of the Beduins in visiting him, and making free with his effects, troubled him excessively. Yet, at the same time, he awards to the Towara Arab the credit of having good capabilities, of being unwearied in service, desirous

to anticipate what is wanted, and willing to bring wood and water, if he can do it with the air of a free man; for with his unbroken spirit he will not be ordered, nor obey as a mere menial.

At the time of the French occupation of Egypt, the Arabs, who had been barbarously treated by the Mamelukes, sided with the Franks, and were able to do some service. Emissaries were sent among them then, and were able to get more full knowledge concerning them, than it had been within Volney's power to obtain. Volney visited Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the Tor region of the Peninsula, but he never explored the interior of the latter. The reports brought by him regarding the patriarchal customs of the Towara were confirmed: all the tribes were found to be ready for instant war, and to avenge any insult offered one to another; but during the forty-one days which Coutelle passed among them, all his tents stood open day and night: nothing was stolen, nothing was injured. The Beduin never betrays the sacred confidence of those who trust themselves to him.

The skin of the Towara, Coutelle informs us, is sunburnt, very brown, almost black: their dark eye lively, and slightly fringed: their expression serious, but not sad: their height from four feet ten inches to five feet four, and therefore only medium. Poverty was universal among them: whoever possessed camels was rich, whoever did not was poor, and others must provide for him and stand by him. Their leading occupation, he tells us, is the burning of charcoal; but as they have no axes to hew down the trees, they burn it at the lower part of the trunk, and then topple it over with stones. The rude axes which they had brought from Cairo were useless among them; but their fathers had burned the trees down, they said, and so could they. They spoke very lightly of the probable results of their wanton destruction of the growing wood: Allah would provide. They only burn as much coal as their camels can carry: the bags of coal they bring to the road, and await the passage of a caravan. It has a quick sale in Cairo: a camel-load of that made of the seyal brings eighteen francs; of the tamarisk, twelve to fifteen,—a sum which the Beduin must make last for the supply of his family for six weeks or two months. He must go to Cairo to procure all his corn, coffee, beans, and tobacco, and bring all these back to

the desert. This shows how very little it requires to support the Beduin. But a great deal of additional occupation is given to them in transporting goods to Cairo. Sometimes two or three thousand camels are required to take a single cargo across the country. The sheikhs gather up all the scattered ones, bring them together, and in this way exercise a great deal of power, and add materially to their gains. The Towara sheikhs have in some instances, too, provided as many as eighty camels for the conveying of a single caravan over the route to Mecca, for which they received eight hundred francs, a hundredweight of coffee, twelve ardeb of corn, and three suits of clothes.

The accession of Mehmed Ali to the viceroyalty of Egypt was a great hindrance to the freedom with which the Towara sheikhs had before that time arranged all matters of transport across the Sinai Peninsula. He assumed all the control of the caravans, he purveyed for them through his agents, and really monopolized the whole carrying trade. At the same time, he compelled all the Arab tribes to respect and fear him. He secured the appearance at least of a kind of settled life among them; but Burckhardt saw plainly that that would not endure when the strong arm was taken away, but that they would resume at once their old wild and roving habits.

It seems probable that more influence is exerted over the Towara from the main Peninsula of Arabia than comes from the Egyptian side. In a passage which Schimper has given in his manuscript journey, there is a trace of such influences, which, however, is not elsewhere confirmed. Schimper tells us that, in all the serious quarrels, the Arabs of the Sinai Peninsula choose an umpire in the adjacent Hedjas, calling in for this purpose the sheikh of the Muähle (probably meaning the Muwaila or Moilah). This has never been done with Mehmed Ali: he has never interfered at all, nor taken any part in the internal troubles of the Sinai Peninsula. The Arabs have not in form paid any tax to him; on the contrary, they received for years, as has already been remarked, an annual subsidy from him. But they have not been the gainers; the crafty and powerful viceroy retained the larger share of the advantage, when he insisted on settling the price at which they should transport his goods. Still a little, even from the hand of so self-

seeking a man as he, is all that is needed to sustain a Beduin family: Burckhardt tells us that four Spanish dollars a year will keep hunger from the door. The food of the Arab is rarely more than bread, butter, and milk, and often salt must take the place of the last two: many of the tribes—the Mezeine, for example—have to content themselves with a mere diet of fish.

Burckhardt tells us that all the tribes of the Towara complain bitterly of the unfruitfulness of their wives; and it is true that this is more marked among the Beduins than among the Arabs who have fixed settlements, three children being held to be a large family. Only by an increasing number of children can there be any hope of the Towara gaining more power than they have now; and a wise Providence seems to have adapted the fruitfulness of the women to the very barrenness of the country, even if we do not seek the reason of it in polygamy, which here, as elsewhere, does not enlarge the number of posterity, but diminishes it.

The Mezeine appear to be the wildest, the boldest, and at the same time the most destitute, of all the tribes of the Towara. Their nearness to the fierce inhabitants of Edom, and the savage and dreary aspect of their desolate coast, may contribute to this. They are a large tribe, and number about four hundred and fifty armed men, including lads of sixteen years. Their main occupation is fishing. They split the fish which they catch (using both the spear and the line), let it dry in the sun, and then eat it, without any other preparation. What corn they have comes from a fatty plant which grows along the shore of the Ælanitic Gulf, the seeds of which they rub between two stones: the meal which results they bake in the ashes. They sometimes have dates, butter, and milk, but very rarely; and this, with fish, and occasionally green corn, constitutes the entire category of articles which they ever use for food. They traffic a little in dried fish, turtle, and mother-of-pearl,—enough to provide for their scanty wants, and to clothe themselves with rags.

The clothing of the Beduins consists, among the men, of a ragged woollen shirt, with alternate brown and white stripes, with white sleeves; a leather girdle around the waist, into which a broad, crooked knife, about two feet long, is stuck. Some particoloured rags, fastened together with woollen yarn,

are worn about the head, the name kesiyeh being given to the fantastic covering. The sheikhs often wear shawls upon the head. A bandolier of twisted leather, and thrown over the shoulder, contains the pocket for tinder, cartridges, and a little powder. The matchlock is swung around the back. The feet are shod with sandals, never with shoes. The women wear a black woollen shirt, and upon the head a cotton cloth, which they can draw down at the approach of strangers, so that it shall veil them from head to foot, and leave only their eyes exposed. A veil of white linen is a rare luxury among them. They sometimes twist bits of mother-of-pearl into their hair, and wear a huge copper ring in the nose; their hands they adorn with rings of horn or glass. Their chief occupation is providing food, baking bread on sheet-iron plates or on hot stones, taking care of the cattle, and the milk, and spinning and weaving the few articles which they need from wool and goats' hair, neither of which they wash before using it. The care of the naked children which are running about consumes neither time nor thought. Music and dancing are their chief recreations; and while enjoying themselves thus, they use the tambourine, the rabaki, a simple kind of viol, reed fifes, and castanets. Their singing is very monotonous. The dress which I have described above is that in almost universal use, although the turban is not unknown among the Beduins. For weapons they have not only rude guns, but a rugged kind of bludgeon, with a large knotted end. These are made at Damascus.

The accounts of the older travellers regarding the points which I have recapitulated are all confirmed by the later writers: the want of flocks, the entire lack of herds, the weakness of the camels, is in marked contrast with those found at the northern extremity of the Peninsula; the want of rain often producing such depths of hunger as almost to drive the poor Towara Arabs to despair. The great increase of travellers in the Peninsula is only to the advantage of a few; it confers no general wealth, and alleviates no general misery. Regarding the honesty, faithfulness, readiness, constancy, and capability of the Towara sheikhs, there is only one voice among those who have visited the country. Compare all that has been written about Tuweileh, Birhârah, Abu Rashid, Hussein,

with the rawness and the roughness attributed to the savage and wild sheikhs of the Tihyahas and the more northern tribes. But their own statements about their numbers and the extent of their possessions are utterly untrustworthy. The question was once put to an Arab, who belonged to a tribe occupying about three hundred tents, how many brothers he had, meaning tribe-brothers. He took up a handful of sand from the ground, flung it into the air, and replied, "As many as that,"—a mode of speech identical with that employed in Abraham's time (Gen. xxii. 17).

Despite the constant clashing of interests growing out of the transit of travellers, and the temporary accession of gain which this involves; despite the chances of disagreement about the possession of wells and fertile places; despite the envy, and hatred, and jealousies, and strifes, which must be engendered among men so rude and primitive in all their habits and feelings; yet actual resort to arms, *i.e.* to battles which involve slaughter, is very rare. Their sheikhs retain the patriarchal right of adjusting differences; and they do this so wisely, and with such even-handed justice, that broils are often broken up before they come to the stage of open hostilities. Still the ancient "blood for blood" vengeance remains in its old force among the Beduins,—an institution which Moses could not do away with among the Israelites, and which he could merely soften by establishing "cities of refuge" (Ex. xxi. 13; Num. xxxv. 9–13).

The Beduins never relinquish the determination to avenge themselves for an offence which demands blood for its expiation: the guilty party can emigrate, but a composition and reconciliation is one of the rarest things among them. In all their internal quarrels they never appeal to the ruler of Egypt; but when they offer any affront or do any injury to a stranger, the Egyptian power promptly slips in, and never gives up the matter without being in some way itself the gainer.

With all their predatory habits towards strangers who are not their guests, theft, except in cases of extreme hunger, is almost unknown among the Beduins, even the poorest. Indeed, not even extreme hunger is always a sufficient palliation; and cases have been known of the Towara putting their own sons to death, on account of some trifling purloining. One traveller

tells us of having seen a rock in the Wadi Taiyibe, whence a Towara hurled his son, bound hand and foot, for stealing some corn from the stores of a friend. An Anieseh Arab, however, he tells us, would have gone to such extremities only when property had been taken from a guest.

Adultery is a serious offence with the Beduin: he is extremely sensitive to the infringement of the marriage vow; and although it very seldom happens that death is inflicted, yet in cases where adultery occurs, the death penalty alone can atone for the crime. In one word, the whole habits, laws of justice, and relations with each other are so peculiar, that one needs to understand them well, or he falls into continual mistakes.

With all the Beduin's natural aptitude, he very seldom learns how to read or write: even their highest sheikhs must have the communications from the Egyptian ruler read to them in the convent. Among the Towara this deficiency seems to be the result of habit, and a lack of opportunity; but among the tribes occupying the northern portion of the Peninsula, it appears to be considered unworthy of a free Arab to be able to do such things as read and write. Just as they boast of their restless wildness, and give over the few fertile tracts of their country into the hands of fellahs to till, they seem to despise all the arts of civilisation, and wish to keep as free from them as possible.

Only in name are they followers of their false prophet, and their few religious observances show scarcely a trace of the Koran: the meagre usages which are traditional among them are hardly to be called by the name religion; they are merely a matter of custom, and no true bond of union. They venerate, outwardly at least, the names of Moses (Musa) and Mohammed; but so little heed do they pay to the precepts of the latter, that one of the most observant travellers says that he has never heard them repeat any of the prayers which Moslems are expected to be familiar with, or to practise ablutions. Nor can the want of water be pleaded as an excuse; for there is no lack of sand, which would, by Moslem custom, answer the purpose just as well. One traveller could trace no other form of adherence to religious forms than the use of the words "bis Millah," *i.e.* in the name of God. Many of them have never made an attempt to learn a single prayer. The fast of Ramadan is the only

general sign which is met of their Mohammedan faith, and not all the Beduin tribes celebrate even that: in the camps of the Araba it was only regarded at the times of sheep slaughter, feasting, or of rain, and then without prayer or any religious rites; and near as they are to Mecca, they seldom allude to the pilgrimage thither. They sometimes offer a sheep or a goat at the tomb of a sheikh, in the way of fulfilling a vow, or gaining some extraordinary favour—the making of a favourable journey, or the saving of a camel from death, or the like; and at such times they smear the neck of the creature or their own bodies with bloody crosses,—an act which is not rare with them.

The habit of using profane language among them is incredibly common. Their mouth is full of cursing, one traveller tells us. They can scarcely give an answer without accompanying it with an oath. There is a marked difference in this from the pure, ancient patriarchal faith of the Hebrews in the God of Abraham, which is sometimes forgotten by those who speak as though the appeals of the wild Beduin to Allah could be considered analogous to the Jewish methods of speech about Jehovah.

Yet, in spite of their profanity, the oath is held sacredly inviolate among the Arabs. Henniker, who was present at the taking of one, gives this account of the ceremony: The oldest present drew his sword, placed salt on the blade, and put a morsel into his mouth, saying to the Englishman, "Do likewise." The eating salt together, and the display of the drawn sword, made them as blood relations, according to the Beduin usage. The Arab then said, "Son of my uncle, thy head is upon my shoulders." After that he would have stood by his "brother" to death itself. Sometimes they swear by the beard of the prophet and the honour of their wives. Burckhardt tells us that he once received the most solemn oath which a Beduin can give. The sheikh placed one hand on his son's head, and the other on the fore-feet of his horse, and then swore faithful service. An oath thus given has never been known to be broken. This sacred regard to their plighted word is a very notable and saving element in the Arab character. Its moral value is incalculable.

For the thorough instruction of these sons of the desert

there have never been made any missionary efforts, either on the part of Mohammedans or of Christians. The miserably inefficient service of the convent towards this end is only too notorious. The prior answered one of the questions of an American traveller with the words, "They would become Christians to-morrow if they could gain anything by it;" but his meaning of the word Christian only involves baptism and making the sign of the cross; and the monk who tried to establish a school at Tor gave up the undertaking as useless. Robinson thought, however, that the establishment of an evangelical mission among them would be followed by good results, as they are a mild and susceptible race, as well as naturally clever; but that they must be taken from the desert and set in permanent abodes before such a step could be taken with profit. Only when they outgrow the strange fascination of their wild and roving life, and acquire a taste for regular labour, can they become good Christians. But a genuine Christian convent would be a great boon to them, if one could be established in their country: not one like that at Sinai, which lacks a true Christian principle of life, but one which should work beneficently upon the Arab character. Worthy to be laid to heart are the words of my young friend Strauss in his *Sinai and Golgotha*. Their pure morals and their belief in one God, Maker of heaven and earth, having His throne in heaven, and from whom cometh every good thing, the Arab receives by direct inheritance from Abraham. By rigid rectitude they strive to make this gift perpetual, till Allah calls them from the land of the living. What Allah does is well done. The way is paved by these simple elements of faith for the coming of the true missionary of the cross; and if once the armed mail of their indifference could be pierced by the strong and sharp weapon of Christian love, they would make active and living members of Christ's church. Yet they have much to unlearn and cast aside, for as yet they are but "wild men," as their father Ishmael was (Gen. xvi. 12) four thousand years ago.

DISCURSION III.

THE BENI EL SHAM, OR ARAB EL SHAM—THE BEDUIN TRIBES NORTH OF THE TIH RANGE, AS FAR AS GAZA, HEBRON, AND EL-GHOR OF THE DEAD SEA.

Far more scanty than our knowledge regarding the Towara, is our acquaintance with those northern tribes who inhabit the broad and barren plateau, so little visited by European travellers, and the country immediately contiguous at the east, the ancient Idumæa. Among the least known are the tribes occupying the Tih chain or chains, the Tihyahah, and the two allied tribes, the Terabein and the Haiwat; even less known still are the Azazimeh; but more visited are those at the north, towards Hebron and the Ariba, as well as towards el-Ghor, the Saidieh, Dhullam, Jehalin, Alowin, Omran, Howeitat, Maaz, Jebalije, and others not so widely diffused, among whom may be reckoned the dwellers in Wadi Musa. Of all of these our knowledge is but fragmentary; and although we are aware, in a general way, of the main differences between them, yet it would be presumptuous to enter into a nice comparison of those who now occupy those regions with the people who lived there for centuries in primeval times, of whom we read in Ps. lxxxiii. 5–9: "For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah."

A mutual alliance of this sort made them much more formidable in ancient times than they are now, the use of so serviceable a means of protection being lost from their knowledge. Instead of combining against a powerful foe, and in that combination making themselves invincible, they spend their best energies in warring upon each other, become continually weaker, and sink into ever deeper depths of barbarism.

There cannot fail to be great differences in these tribes from each other, little as we know about those differences. The Azazimeh and those of Edom do not seem to be of genuine Arab nature, living as they do, pent up in their unapproachable fastnesses. It is possible that they, of whose entrance into the

country hardly a trace remains, may be the aboriginal inhabitants, and have precedence in this regard over the Towara. Yet I confess that, judging from Macrizi's allusion to the "Amalekites of Pharan" in the fourteenth century, I cannot heartily accept this. The circumstances which seem to identify the Towara with the ancient Midianites form a strong argument. Yet nothing can be affirmed decisively about this till future investigators shall have made closer observations than have yet been made, and shall penetrate deeper into the language of these rude tribes.

1. The Tiyaha, or Tiyâhah (Robinson), Bteiaha or Ti (Seetzen), Tyaha (Burckhardt), Tyar (Niebuhr). They inhabit the Tih range, directly north of the Sinai group. They are peculiar in respect of size, physiognomy, rough manners, and general ignorance: in every way different from the more finely-organized Towara, as might be expected of a tribe which sedulously avoids communication with other tribes and with strangers. It is remarkable that no trace has been discovered among them of any special tribe name, nor of any subordinate divisions. They are only known by the name Tiyaha, *i.e.* dwellers on the Tih; and this appellation is not theirs, but has been given by strangers. The Towara have received that name from those who have visited them, to designate them as the inhabitants of the Tor; but the special names Szowaleha, Owareme, Mezeine, Korashy, Aleygat, are their own. According to Burckhardt, the Tiyaha extend from Dillal, at the southern extremity of the Tih range, northward as far as Gaza and Hebron; the Terebin to the north-west, occupying the district west of a line drawn from Dillal to Gaza; and the Haiwat to the north-east, towards Akaba and the Wadi Jerafeh.

In earlier times, and even as late as the end of the last century, all the northern tribes, even the Howeitat and the Alowein at the north-east, and those as far north as Gaza and Hebron, were considered ghafirs, or protectors of the convent, and possessed the right of escorting travellers thither. Formerly most travellers came into the country by a northern route; and it is only since the quickening of the life of Egypt by French occupation, that the route by way of Cairo and Suez has become a common or desirable one. This change, however,

has put all the business of convoying travellers into the hands of the Towara; yet, if necessity or choice should impel any traveller to select now the route over the Tih, the Towara would have the right of conducting him only to Nakhl. The line from Suez to Akaba, passing through Nakhl, is the recognised barrier between these widely separated tribes. The Tih range serves, therefore, not only as a physical barrier, analogous to the water-sheds of more moist climates, but also as a real wall of partition between men, keeping up a complete estrangement between Towara at the south of it, and the tribes which occupy it as a home.

2. The Terabein, or Terabin, were once widely scattered over Egypt, but were driven thence by one of the Mamelukes, Ali Bey, who was bent on their annihilation. They fled for refuge to the Tih mountains, and now live on its western slopes, known as er-Rahah, between Nakhl and Suez, and as far north as the country south of Hebron. Their headquarters are around Tafet Sudr. A small branch of this tribe is found on the part of the Tih range contiguous to the Gulf of Akaba. Between the Towara and the Terabin there is the closest alliance, and their mutual oath pledges them to stand by each other "as long as there is water in the sea, and till hair shall grow in the palm of the hand." They are said to be the most numerous of all the Beduin tribes.

3. The Haiwât occupy the eastward region of the great Tih plateau, a district running from the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akaba as far west as Jebel Araif en Nakah. They are a wild predatory tribe, numbering, according to Ruppell, about one hundred armed men. In consequence of their possession of the pasturage in the neighbourhood of the springs of eth-Themed, they command the road to the north-east of the Peninsula; while the Terabin at the west, and the Tiyaha in the middle, have to content themselves with a region possessing now scarcely a redeeming trait. These three tribes combined are stronger than the combined tribes of the Towara; and when they are reduced to great straits, they are compelled to cross the barrier, and to wrest the right of pasturing around the southern springs,—a measure which has often led to collision, and is liable to do so at any time. The northern wadis of this whole region—el-Arish, Ghoreir, and el-Akaba—are much more

productive than the southern ones; especially is this the case as you approach Gaza and Hebron.

Besides the tribes above mentioned, there are also found a number along the Hadj route, bearing various names, but all of them designated by Seetzen as Arab el Shâm, or Syrian Arabs, in contradistinction to the Arab et-Tor, the Towara. These tribes are brought into close relation with the caravans to Mecca, and used to plunder them; but with the rigid rule of Mehmed Ali this disappeared; and the establishment of the forts at Adjerud, of Nakhl, and of Akaba, along the route, has since served as sufficient protection against Arab violence. But in general they are thoroughly independent: they have no political connection either with Egypt or with Syria, and they continue to regard it as their sacred right to plunder whatever and wherever they can. United in a kind of confederation, they carry on incessant war, now on this side, now on that; and despite the protection which the forts give to the Mecca caravans, other strangers feel that they pass through their country with peril: Once in a while, when they are on specially good terms with the Pasha of Egypt, they go thither to get corn, the market there being by far the most desirable one; but in general their traffic is with Gaza and with Khalyle (Hebron). The Alowin, by virtue of their possession of the mountains of Odjme; the Heiwat, by virtue of the possession of the springs of eth-Themed; and the Omran, as lords of the desert from Akaba southward to Moeleh,—have the right of exacting toll of the Hadj caravans for passing through their lands.

To some of the more prominent of these northern tribes, the group of mountains known as the Jebel Moyle serves as a natural barrier in the way of their further expansion. But of the tribes themselves, we are prevented by a lack of knowledge from giving a detailed account. They are: the Tiyaha in the south, extending northward through the Tih desert; northwest of them, the Terebin; north-east, the Heiwat, whose impassable frontier is el-Mukrah and Araif en Nakah: the Azazimeh, inhabiting the mighty Jebel Moyle and its unknown highlands; north and north-east of these, towards the Ghor, the Dead Sea, and Hebron, the Saidiyeh, the Dhullam, and the Jehâlin; east of these, taken as a body, between the Ælanitic Gulf and the Dead Sea, and found running out in various

directions, but ranging thus from south to north, the tribes of the Omran, the Maaz, the Alowin, the Howeitat, the Wadi Musa, and Jebali.

4. Of the Azazimeh we know nothing more than what Seetzen could learn about them, and that one of them who was pasturing his flock at the ruins of Abdeh (Eboda), scolded Robinson's guide bitterly for allowing an "unbeliever" to come into the country to spy it out.

5. The Saidin, or Saidiyeh, live north-east of the Azaziyeh, towards the south-west side of the Ghor and the Dead Sea, and are found most numerously on the heights of Kurnub (Thamara). In the winter they often withdraw with their flocks to the lowest parts of the Ghor and the Araba. They are only known as a plundering tribe, like their neighbours on the north, the Dhullam. Both are insignificant in respect of size.

6. The Jehâlin, north and east of the last, and therefore not far removed from Hebron and the Dead Sea, are better known than those just mentioned, having been employed as guides by Robinson and De Bertou in their visits to Petra. Both of these travellers got no good impression of them: they proved themselves cowardly, untrustworthy, rough, and more deficient in capacity and in knowledge than the Towara; very careless, too, in giving the names of places, and seemingly looking upon the Ghor and the Araba as a mere convenience to travellers. Their headquarters, about four hours south-east of Hebron, displayed some attention to agriculture.

DISCURSION IV.

THE MORE EASTERN BEDUIN TRIBES OF THE ARABA, OF THE JEBEL SHERA, JEBAL, AND EL-GHOR.

The very striking characteristics of these eastern tribes—namely, of the Omran or Amran, Maaz, Alowin, Howeitât, Lyathene (or Wadi Musa), Jebalije, and others alluded to above, and whose district we shall consider at length in the next chapter—make it advisable to sum up what we know of them here as a general preliminary sketch.

1. The district held by the most southern of them, the Omran, extends from Akaba as far down as Moeleh. This tribe

is known for its warlike character; and in consequence of its alliance with the Alowin and the Haiwat, it is universally feared. The Omran have no place where they settle, excepting beside the fortress of Akaba, where some of their people have built huts of palm twigs, and have brought a little land under cultivation. The guides who have been chosen from them to conduct travellers to Hebron, have proved lazy and inefficient; very untrustworthy, moreover, in comparison with the Towara. They are divided into five subdivisions, all under one head sheikh, however, who was the only man among them who could boast of owning horses.

2. The Maaz, a Beduin tribe, which is devoted in a manner to the rearing of flocks of sheep in the mountain region of Hismah, the southern spur of Jebel Shera or Seir, and also inhabiting, according to another and more probable account, a sandy region encompassed by those mountains. They have never been visited by Europeans. They often wander far away from their own country; they have been met on the very borders of Egypt, and at the western passage of the Wadi Musa, driven from their own sand waste by the necessities of their flocks. They are on friendly terms with the Howeitat, but are continually at enmity with the Towara.

3. The Howeitat (Burckhardt), Haweitat (Robinson)—Huethat in the plural, Huety in the singular (Seetzen)—are a tribe whose domain extends from the southern part of Wadi Magna and Moilah as far north as Petra. It is well known as one of the fiercest, most independent, and most numerous of the Arab tribes. It extends from Moilah to Akaba, a five days' journey; and eastward as far as the Syrian Hadj-station, Akaba es Shamy. In the spring it throws its hordes over into the pasture grounds of the Tiyaha, its allies; in the summer it returns to the mountains of Sherah and Jebal. In the winter time the tribe goes northward to the sheltered seclusion of el-Ghor. In the spring of 1806 they were found in the neighbourhood of Kirmel (Kurmul, Carmel). At that time they were subject to the Wahabis, and paid tribute to them, but exercised a cruel tyranny over the smaller tribes around them. Their strong position among their mountains no doubt contributes to their boldness, and enables them to attack with impunity, and even to extend their ravages to a

distance of a twenty days' journey, secure that they can fall back upon their stronghold.

The Howeitat receive considerable sums from Egyptian caravans in way of tribute; they are also in the receipt of a certain amount from the forts along the route of Syrian pilgrims between Maan and Tebuk, which they regard as a part of their own domain. They often serve the Egyptian caravans as the Anizeh serve the Syrian pilgrims, *i.e.* they rob them in the way. The great object of desire in these plunderings is the coffee which the caravans often carry back from Mecca, an article which commands a ready sale at Cairo. And not in Cairo alone, but at Kerek, Hebron, and Tafyle, it is easily exchangeable, particularly on the usual terms of barter, namely, an equal weight of coffee for grain.

During a state of bitter feeling between the Towara and the combined Maaz and Howeitat, previous to the visits of Robinson and Laborde, the former tribe constructed a formidable barricade of stone across the upper caravan route, which Russegger saw, and asserts to have been constructed of granite and porphyry. A rare thing for the Arabs of the desert to do! It was about six feet in height, and when perfect, it not only entirely crossed the Wadi Barak, but crept up the mountains on both sides as far as the eye could reach. It was situated, somewhat singularly, on almost the same spot which had been the scene of the great battle, already alluded to, between the Szowaleha and the combined Aleygat and Mezeine.

The reader is already aware of the fact, that years ago the Towara had the entire right of escorting travellers and caravans of goods from Cairo to Suez. It not only annoyed, it enraged them, to find that the Egyptians were actually employing Arabs of the Howeitat and Maaz to do the same service, for it took away one of their most important sources of revenue, and made their poverty even more severe. In order to compensate themselves for this loss, all the Towara tribes combined, and plundered a caravan of more than a hundred camels, laden with coffee and other valuables, on the road between Cairo and Suez. They took a good portion of it back to their own mountains. The viceroy immediately demanded the restitution of the booty. But the larger part had been sold or wasted, and they made this laconic reply to his demand, "We were hungry, and we have eaten."

Robinson has fully told the story of Mehmed Ali's vigorous action, and we need but to allude to it here. He instantly sent out against the Towara an army of from two to three thousand men. The Towara, thinking to hinder them, and to defeat their object, constructed the above-mentioned barricade, and supposed themselves secure. The Egyptian troops, instead of endeavouring to break it down or leap over it, climbed up the mountains and descended upon the Towara, putting them to instant flight. The result was that the Arabs had to pay the entire cost of the expedition; and since that time they have offered no opposition to the Egyptian power.

Robinson, who was accompanied on his journey from Hebron to Petra by five of the Howeitat, discovered that the tribe has ramified into many parts of that region, and that the various divisions bear different names. He has recorded the names of the Abu Rashid, Jazy, Bedun, and Alawin. Where the Jazy live is not clear, perhaps in the region between Wadi Musa and Maan. The Bedun range through the ravines of the Wadi Musa, and pretend to have received the right from the Pasha of Egypt to be the ghafirs or protectors of persons visiting Petra,—a sheer lie; for, far from being protectors, they are so hostile that travellers are compelled to flee in haste. The district of the Abu Rashid lies between Shobak and Kerak. It was their powerful chief Abu Rashid who opened a way, by his energy and fidelity, for the British expedition of 1818 to enter Petra; and it was owing to this chief's absence in 1812, that Burckhardt experienced difficulties in accomplishing the same feat, which his successors happily avoided.

4. The Alawin (Robinson), Alowein, Aluein (Burckhardt), Alauin (Laborde), have their home in the neighbourhood of Akaba, in the valley of the Araba, which they control, so that the road to Wadi Musa or Petra necessarily leads through their domain. The whole Wadi Araba is subject to them, while the Omran, Maaz, and Howeitat inhabit the hill country lying to the east. The right of escort is theirs, therefore, in the case of all travellers who want to go from Akaba to the ruins at the north: they have thus been brought much into contact with travellers, and are fully described in the accounts of Laborde, von Schubert, Lord Lindsay, and others.

The limit of their territory south-west of the fortress of

Akaba is marked by the Alawy stone, but northward they have not so definite a barrier, and pursue their maraudings as far as the springs of the Jehalin, to obtain water for their flocks; a practice which gives offence, and is constantly resented by the weaker Jehalin. Only, therefore, when the Alawin are in league with the tribes of Wadi Musa can they quietly convey travellers to Petra; and this is seldom the case. The Alawin have been characterized by all who have had dealings with them, except Laborde, as a fierce, untrustworthy, and most avaricious tribe. The sheikh Hussein, who lived near Akaba, was for a long time the scourge of tourists. They were nominally responsible to the Pasha of Egypt for the safety of travellers whom they undertook to escort; but in their own country, and in the exercise of their wild freedom, they laugh the Pasha to scorn. They have been repeatedly pursued by Egyptian soldiers, and they either yield, or fly to some wild waste beyond the reach of civilised man; and just as soon as the soldiers are withdrawn, their fierce lawlessness breaks out once more. Their outfit is not so meagre as that of the Towara, but consists of daggers, guns, sabres, tobacco-pipes, shoes or sandals of fish skin, and tobacco-pouches made from the skin of lizards. The Alawin are exceedingly disliked by their neighbours: the Howeitat pretend to regard them as a mere subordinate branch of themselves; while the smaller tribes hate them as fierce upstarts, who, because they are strong, dare to break through all mutual rights, and trample all under foot who interfere with their imperious demands.

To close the above account of the Beduins, we give the interesting list of the protectors of the convent, not belonging to the Towara, who did service during the last century. They were all entitled to a stipend from the convent, under this condition, that in case any property of the monks was stolen or injured, they should restore the loss. They were—in addition to the five tribes already mentioned, namely the Heiwat, Amran, Aluein, Terabin, and Howeytat—these: the Rebabein, a small tribe, living mainly in the Tor; the Syayhe, a small tribe, living east of Akaba among the Omran; the Retymat, near Gaza and Hebron; Hokuk, the most prominent tribe of the Tiyaha, and the only one whose special name we are able to learn; the Mesaid, a small tribe of the province Sherkyeh in

Egypt; Sowareke, in the desert between Sinai and Gaza; and Ulad el-Forkora, a leading tributary of the Wahydat tribe, near Gaza. Besides these, it ought not to be omitted that Burckhardt discovered a ghafir Shamul' (Samuel), remarkable as a Hebrew name indigenous in a country so destitute of traces of the ancient wanderings of that people.

DISCURSION V.

THE AGRICULTURAL ARAB TRIBES—THE FELLAHS—THE HALF BEDUINS.

It yet remains for me to speak briefly of the fellahs, or fellahin, *i.e.* the Arabs who practise tillage, and who, in connection with the Beladin, or Arabs who dwell in cities, are held in the most contemptuous scorn by the real Bedawin, the Beduins, Sons of the Desert. Genuine fellahs, such as are common on the Nile and in Syria, are very rarely found in Sinai or Petræa: there is such a lack of soil, that no number of men could anywhere support themselves by tillage alone; and the most of the fellahs who are met with there, occupy the transitional stage between a nomadic and an agricultural life. They sow their grain, and then go forth on their wanderings till the harvest time comes, when they return to gather in the scanty crop. Very few of them have huts or villages; they generally encamp in tents, even when in the district which they cultivate. Regular villages are seldom to be found, except in the neighbourhood of fruit, olive, and date trees, as at Akaba in the Wadi Feiran, at Elji in the Wadi Musa, at Tor, and on the sites of ancient cities in the neighbourhood of Hebron.

In the Wadi Musa, among the es-Sherah chain, and in Jebal, the fellahs are half Beduins, and unite what is bad in both kinds of life.

All travellers who have gone near their leading village in the Wadi Musa, Elji, a place of from two hundred to three hundred houses, have confirmed the story of the bad character of the fellahs inhabiting it. Despite the picturesque situation, and the beautiful terraces of corn-fields, gardens, and olive trees which surround it, it is a nest of infamous robbers, destitute alike of honour and of gentleness. Their chief in 1828, a man

of eighty years, was of so cruel a nature, that one traveller compares him to a bloodhound. They feared the Alawin Sheikh Hussein; and those who travelled under his protection were safe. They are a cowardly race, both cruel and vicious, and lack the boldness of the true Beduin. They are exceedingly given to theft, and will steal the cover of a tin kettle, thinking it to be silver. In travelling among them, even if guides be employed to propitiate them, it is necessary to take the wild Arabs of the desert to guard the luggage at night.

They are destitute also of Beduin hospitality. Their word is false as water; and not even the pledge of their sheikhs can be trusted. Nor do they stand on terms of amity with the Arabs of the desert. Yet they dare not attack them, for they fear that stern death penalty with which a Beduin follows an attack upon his life. Moreover, they stand in a salutary dread of having their gardens laid waste, and of being thus deprived of their living. This holds them in check in spite of the security which the rocks offer as hiding-places.

Farther to the north in Shobek, Tafyle for example, they are more reputable; they are richer, and at the same time more warlike and powerful, and can take a stand more independent of the Beduin tribes. Robinson has given the names of a number of the subordinate divisions of the fellahs, which the reader will find in the *Biblical Researches*. They have individually so little importance, that I will not quote the separate designations, excepting so far as to say that the poorest of all the fellahs are those who inhabit the marshes of el-Ghor, living in the Wadi Kurashy, and in the so-called Ghor es Sâfieh. They are known as Ghawârineh; and though their wet lands allow them to raise wheat, barley, durah, and tobacco, yet they are a poor, feeble, pitiable race, and are held in the utmost scorn by the Beduins. They are treated with more contumely than slaves. They live in huts of reed and cane, but are at the mercy of every wandering tribe. Their number is about fifty ablebodied men. It was formerly much larger, but the constant ill-treatment which they have received has caused them to emigrate northward, and to settle in the Valley of the Jordan.

CHAPTER IX.

SEC. 14. THE THIRD GROUP OF NORTHERN ROUTES: THOSE RUNNING FROM AKABA AND THE ÆLANITIC GULF, THROUGH IDUMÆA TO JUDÆA.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

AT the time of David, Solomon, and Jehoshaphat, when the voyages to Ophir brought Ezion-geber and Elath into great prominence, and then at the far more modern period of the Nabathæans, the great highway leading from Aila to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea must have been one of the chief thoroughfares for commerce in the East. So, too, it must have remained as long as the Byzantine supremacy was sustained in that region, and the garrisons of Beersheba, Chermule, Zoar, Aila, Zodocata, and Haurara were kept up; so long, too, as the military roads were kept in repair which led from Jerusalem to Aila, the western one passing Diana, Rasa, Gupsaria, Lysa, Oboda, and Elysa, and the eastern one passing Præsidio, Haurara, Zodagatta, Petra, Hegla, Thoana, Robabatora, and Thamara, assuring a safe transit of goods from Syria to Arabia, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt. The continuance of the episcopal residences at Tophel to 518, and at Arindela near Petra, and at Elusa and Arad north of Kadesh-Barnea till 536, strengthens the conviction that even then those places lay on much frequented routes. In the times of Nilus and Antoninus Martyr, however, during the fifth and sixth centuries, the security of these important places was much imperilled by attacks of Ishmaelites and Saracens; and with the ravages of Mohammed the peace of the whole district utterly passed away. At the battle of Muta, fought on the very frontier of Syria in the year 629 of

the Christian era[1] and in the eighth of the Hegira, the Mohammedans were entirely successful, and then begins the decline of the lower Ghor. From the day of that victory over the Christians, it fell into desolation and the savage wildness of nature. Five years later, at the battle of Jarmuk, fought on the banks of the Hieromax or Sheriat, all Syria, and soon after all Egypt, fell into the hands of the Arabs; and that country south of Palestine, which had before been well cared for and made secure to travellers, was converted into a wild hunting-ground for robbers, through which warlike hordes streamed at will, blasting all the ancient civilisation of the country, and even driving the peaceful Nabathæans from their old home. We have no recorded history of those rough and troublous times; all that remains to us are the few walls, foundations of buildings, cisterns, and other scattered architectural relics which bear witness to an ancient prosperity. Aila and Petra, it would seem probable, were able to hold out the longest in preserving their ancient structures; but they too shared at length in the general desolation.

No writer of the middle ages alludes to the whole territory of which I am now speaking, and it passed into utter oblivion; even Isstachri, Edrisi, Abulfeda, and Macrizi preserve perfect silence concerning it. It was only at the epoch of the Crusades that it emerged from the darkness, and not fully even then. The only light which is thrown upon it, is that which comes from the warlike excursions made into the country, which partially penetrated the darkness which rested upon it. These expeditions were made necessary by the fact that the kings of Jerusalem wished to strengthen themselves from the Saracens on that their most vulnerable side, and took the same measures which Justinian had done before—the garrisoning of the rock fortresses of Edom. It was to these efforts to strengthen themselves that the names of Vallis Moysi (Wadi Musa), Segor (Zoar), Petra Deserti (Kerek), Mons Regalis (Shobek), and others, appear in the chronicles of the Crusades, as they had already done in more ancient history in connection with Athenæus, Demetrius, and Antigonus. Yet the position of Petra, the most important one of all, was unknown to the crusaders;

[1] *Abulfedæ Annales Moslemici*, J. J. Reiskii, ed. Adler, Hafniæ 1789, T. i. p. 143.

and the name, when it occurs in their annals, is only used generally, it having been, like the Arabic word Hejer,[1] the general designation for any rock. In fact, the use of the word in this sense is the reason why the Latins did not perceive that it was applied to one pre-eminent rock, *the* Petra of the region.

The crusaders called the country east and south of their Syrian possessions by the general name Arabia, but they subdivided it into three parts. The portion east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea they termed Arabia Prima; that south of the Dead Sea and around Kerek they termed Arabia Secunda; and that farther south still, Arabia Tertia, or Syria Sobol. Five different expeditions were sent into this region in the course of the twelfth century, between 1100 and 1188. Of these we have but meagre historical details.

The first of these, undertaken by King Baldwin I., marched in the year 1100 from Hebron, around the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, passing Zoar, and came in five days' hard travelling through rough mountainous country (*Arabiæ montanæ introire cessimus*, says their historian Fulcher[2]) to a brook large enough to drive mills, and to a rich, fruitful valley. From this brook the writer could discern the summit of a mountain on which stood a monastery called St Aaron's, and which commemorated the conversation of Aaron and Moses with Jehovah. The valley was called Wadi Musa by their guide, or in the Latin tongue Vallis Moysi. In the geographical ignorance of those times, this mountain (unquestionably Hor) was considered Sinai; and the tomb upon its summit, which is said by the local tradition to be Aaron's, was thought to be a convent. The brook, too, was invested with biblical significance, and was supposed to be the one which issued from the rock after it had been smitten by Moses. One result of this confounding of Hor with Sinai was, that no search was made for Petra in that neighbourhood; it was thought that it must be farther north, in the neighbourhood of Petra Deserta[3] (Kerek). Another

[1] Reinaud in *Journ. Asiat.* 1835, T. xvi. p. 66.

[2] Fulcheri Carnotensis, *Gesta peregrinantium Francorum cum armis Hierusalem pergentium*, in Bongars, *Gesta Dei p. Francos*, Hanoviæ 1611, tom. i. fol. 405, 406.

[3] Deguigni, *Gesch. der Mongol.* iv. p. 157; Reinaud in Michaud, *Bibliographie des Croisades*, Paris 1822, T. ii. note 1 to p. 309.

singular mistake made by the crusaders was to confound Aila, of which they had heard, with Elim, the station of sweet water and palm trees, to which the Israelites came soon after their exodus from Egypt.

In a second expedition, undertaken fourteen years later by the same king, in company with a force of two hundred cavalry and four hundred foot soldiers, he reached a high citadel, four days from Jerusalem, which he garrisoned as a protection to the Christians. This was the first station east of the Jordan held by the Latins. It lay in a region abounding in corn, wine, and oil, and was called by Baldwin Mons Regalis. It is unquestionably the Shobek of the Arabs.[1]

During the next year (1116) the king went over the same route with two hundred men, and advanced as far as Aila. Here he found the true account of the situation of Sinai, and wished to visit the place, but was dissuaded by the monks, who thought that it would bring among the Arabs suspicion of being in fellowship with him, and subject them to new dangers. The historian Fulcher speaks of the water of the Red Sea in language perfectly true at the present day. He was surprised at finding mottled stones and the finest shells upon the beach.[2]

For twenty years Shobek remained the chief, indeed almost the only, possession of the Latins in this mountainous country. At length Kerek was held firmly by Christian authority, and for a long succession of years the garrisons in these two places caused the Saracens the greatest annoyance, seizing their caravans, and sometimes cutting their military connections almost entirely off. In consequence, they were very frequently attacked by Mohammedan forces, and stormed with fury.

A fourth expedition was undertaken by King Baldwin III., while he was yet in his minority, in the year 1144. It went by way of Hebron to Wadi Musa, and had for its object to seize from the Mohammedans a certain unnamed stronghold which had fallen into their hands. The Franks stormed the place for several days with arrows, and with huge stones hurled against it, but without success. At length, however, they resorted to the expedient of cutting down the fine olive grove on which the

[1] *Ad. Ann.* 1116 A.D. § xliii. fol. 426.

[2] Every reader of Robinson and Stanley will recall the enthusiastic language with which they speak of the shells seen near Akaba.—ED.

besieged relied for their means of support, and this proceeding proved effectual.

The fifth expedition was undertaken by Rainald of Chatillon in 1182. It was directed at Aila, but proved unsuccessful; and the leader was exposed to most formidable encounters with Saladin in 1183 and 1184, into whose hands Aila had then fallen. In 1188 Saladin possessed himself of Jerusalem, and of course the Christians' possession of Kerek and Shobek was for ever at an end.

Had it not been for the accounts given by Nowairi and Macrizi, on a preceding page, of Sultan Bibor's visit at Petra in 1254 and 1263, and his journey thence to Shaubak (Mons Regalis[1]) and Kerak, all subsequent allusions to the whole of that territory would have been wanting, and the district would have rested under the shadow of an unbroken eclipse; for even Abulfeda,[2] who must have visited the neighbourhood of Aila, Shobak, and Kerek, and who in fact describes the latter, is very brief in his general description of the country, and only lets slip a casual word respecting a certain little place in the province of Bilkaa called ar-Rakim, *all the inhabitants of which lived in houses carved out of the living rock.* This was for a long time taken to refer to Petra; but later writers, among whom Robinson is pre-eminent, have shown that Abulfeda's ar-Rakim must have lain much farther north, and it would seem but little doubtful that it is Kerek which was first brought to light by Seetzen early in the present century.

With the exception of these faint gleams of light, there was nothing to enliven the gloom which for centuries rested upon this region; for no caravans traversed it, and not even pilgrims to Sinai ventured to go through it, infested as it was by some of the most ruffianly tribes that were anywhere to be found. Volney heard towards the close of the last century that there were interesting ruins in the wilderness, three days' journey south-east of the Dead Sea, but he did not penetrate the mystery further.

In 1806, Seetzen pressed through wild untravelled country from Damascus to Kerek, and then passed round the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, without entering Edom. He heard

[1] Reinaud in *Journal Asiat.* 1835, T. xvi. pp. 65, 66.

[2] Abulfeda, *Tabula Syriæ*, ed. Kochler, Lips. 1766, pp. 88–90.

the Arabs speak of the ruins of Bedra,[1] a day's journey south of Kerek, yet it was not possible for him to go thither. As the Arabs, Seetzen remarks, cannot enunciate the letter *p*, he was of the conviction that the place was no other than the ancient Petra. As in the narrative of Nuwairi, respecting Sultan Bibor's visit to Petra, the place was called Bedr and Bedrija, I cannot doubt that Seetzen is to be considered the true modern discoverer of Petra, although the place is considerably more than a day's journey south of Kerek. One of the sheikhs who told him of the ruins that might be found south of the Dead Sea, spoke of one spot of so great extent that, to use his own language, "he had to weep when he saw them."[2] This place was called Pharoun,[3] and lay, the sheikh said, in the fine fertile valley of Wadi Musa. Near it was the Place of Prayer of Moses and Aaron,—all indications, as we now know, of the neighbourhood of Petra. Seetzen did not suspect, however, the extent of the place thus vaguely hinted at, although he was amazed at the number of the ruins stated by the Arabs to exist between Kerek and Aila. Some of those mentioned to him have been already explored and identified: Tafyle has been found to be the ancient Tophel, Bozra is seen in Bzera el Maan, Arindela in Gharundel, and Zodacatha in Szaddakka. I give a list of the places mentioned to Seetzen by the Arabs,[4] and commend them to the attention of those who may hereafter explore that almost unknown region.

Places still inhabited: Pharoun, Oeddruch, el-Oljy, Dibbetha, Shobak, Bzera el Maan, Korrejet el Ranjy, Taphile, Szulfhe, el-Akaba, el-Szille (the city Selah, which was taken by the Jewish king Amaziah and called Jaktheel, 2 Kings xiv. 7, and which was compelled to send lambs as tribute to Zion, Isa. xvi. 1 or 10), and Ennesa.

Uninhabited ruins: Bosta, Oeddruch, Phedannil, three places bearing the name Jerba, Wadi Musa (including Pha-

[1] Seetzen, letter dated June 11, 1806, in v. Zach's *Mon. Correspond.* vol. xviii. p. 434.

[2] See letter dated Sept. 22, 1807, in same work, vol. xvii. p. 139.

[3] This name seems to have been misunderstood by Seetzen, and to have been Haroun, referring doubtless to the tomb of Aaron on Mount Hor, near Wadi Musa.—ED.

[4] *Mon. Corresp.* xvii. pp. 136-139.

roun), Kalaat el Musora, el-Phardach, ed-Dal-Addam, Ael, Charob, Ruehha, Churbet el Onnik, Churbet el Hajil, el-Guer, Kalaat Phenan, el-Dossek, Dona, Phdon, Umm Hassa, el-Djilledat, Kalaat Daour, Kalaat el Szadakka, Krein, Churbet el Doruk, Churbet el Korna, el-Orja, Grain, Churbet Gor el Kommhh, Churbet el Haje, el-Guera, Churbet el Jam, Churbet el Rajif, el-Dlaga, el-Juese, el-Durrbaszy, Garandil, el-Iherir, el-Hoffza, Szleile, el-Szobara, Maan, el-Magora, Kalaat el Gage, Birat el Shelb, Szejidan Harun, Gor el Mennain, el-Dejanije, Churbet el Jehera, Ennese, Kalaat el Akab, Jeggeiman, Kalaat el Ramm, Rummam, Kneiet el Szeijad, Juene, el-Orrak, Abu Sbib, Ejbiji, Abu Szekakim, el-Szik, el-Orzzas, el-Kreigi, el-Phanara, Mreiga, Bellesken, el-Heijat, and el-Hhmeime.

It was the ardent wish of Seetzen to explore this country himself, but this he was unable to do. It was only ten years, however, before his countryman Burckhardt entered the same field and gained such great results, although leaving so much to others who are yet to come. Burckhardt was followed in 1818 by Banks, Irby, Mangles, and Legh. Laborde and Linant are the first travellers who have entered this country from the south; they came by way of Akaba, and returned the same way. In 1837, Schubert and Lord Lindsay traversed shortly after one another the whole length of the lower Ghor from south to north, with the exception of the part immediately south of the Dead Sea: this they left out of their journey, by taking the mountain road to the left, leading to Hebron. Robinson followed them in 1838, making a special tour from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, and then down to Wadi Musa and Petra, and back by way of the direct Hebron road. Then followed Count Berton, who for the first time examined the question of the depression of the entire Ghor, passing not only through the Jordan valley, but from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba. These have been the chief discoverers of the geographical and historical characteristics of the region which I have now to consider, although many travellers have since gone over the same ground. I shall advance in the discursion from south to north, adhering to the principle adopted in this volume, to begin at a distance from Palestine, and gradually to work my way towards it.

DISCURSION I.

THE ROUTE FROM AKABA TO PETRA.

1. *Laborde's Journey from Aila to Petra, on the west road through Wadi Araba.*

Laborde was the first to bring to our knowledge the existence of a western route running through the heart of the Wadi Araba, which had already been crossed by Burckhardt, and shown to be the "plain" which the children of Israel were obliged to traverse on their way to the promised land. This too is the Desert el Badiah mentioned by Abulfeda, at the southern extremity of which lay Aila; and it too was the tract through which the Roman *Via militaris* ran, which is laid down in the Peutinger Tables, to which I have referred on a previous occasion. The entire distance from Aila to Petra is ninety-nine Roman miles, which corresponds well with Robinson's statement that it is about sixty-six English ones. On his return from Petra to Aila, Laborde took a more eastern route. This eastern road parts from the western at Wadi el Ithm (Getum), about a day's journey north of Akaba. Here the first Roman station, Ad Dianam, is supposed to have stood. The western road probably led directly to Jerusalem, the eastern to Moab, Bashan, and Damascus; the latter must unquestionably have been the way which the children of Israel took as they were leaving the land where they had so long wandered.[1]

The marsh el-Daba, in Wadi Araba, where even at the present day graves may be seen, and Wadi Gharundel, seem to correspond to the stations of Rasa (Gerasa) and Gypsaria of the Peutinger Tables. At the latter of these Laborde discovered fortifications, which were probably employed to defend the entrance to Petra, near by. This Wadi Gharundel is not to be confounded with the one farther north, in which lay the ancient station of Arindela.

On the eastern route from Akaba we have the stations Præsidio, now found in the fortifications of Wadi Getum,—of Haurarra, and Zodagatta, the latter of which seems to be identified in Wadi Szadeko.

[1] K. von Raumer, *Der Zug der Israeliten*, Leipzig 1837, p. 44.

Under the protection of his Alowin leaders, Laborde[1] left Akaba castle, and plunged into the sterile Wadi Araba. In order not to encounter the obstacles lying on the east side of the wadi, he pursued his way in the middle, passing the green and swampy el-Daba, where some farms were standing, and at length entering the green Wadi Gharundel. Traces of the old Roman road were here and there seen, and the journey was continued without encountering any objects of marked interest, till Laborde at length reached the narrow defile running eastward into the interior of the wild mountain range in which Petra lies. There he left the deep Araba valley, and pressed on for three and a half hours, traversing small patches of plain and sandstone gorges, tinged with the oxide of iron, halting at the first specimens of the rock architecture which characterizes Petra. Thence to the city itself it was a journey of three leagues. He passed through a narrow ravine, which correctly is Abu Khusheibeh, a charming spot, cool, and shaded with oleander bushes. On the right he passed a spring which fed a brook of considerable size. The road grew steeper and more difficult as they approached the city. Here Laborde received word that the Arabs had fled from the district, in consequence of the breaking out of the plague among them. Soon Laborde entered the architectural ruins of the place. Letronne[2] says of them, that their façades exhibit a mixed Syriac-Egyptian and Greco-Roman style. Through a gorge whose situation is not specifically given, the travellers gained an impressive view of this unique city of the dead, the exterior of which was as remarkable for the fantastic colours which nature has given, as for those which man's hand has left there. Petra is not, like Palmyra, a monumental city standing in an immeasurable plain; it is not, like Babylon's mounds, on the banks of a mighty river; it is not, like Thebes' open palaces, between the graves of kings; it is not like Jerusalem's ruins or Rome's imperial mansions, which hills expose to the public eye. Petra is a basin surrounded by steep walls of rock, with few scattered fragments of architecture and piles of rubbish, and through its heart runs that brook of which all travellers make mention. It is not a

[1] L. de Laborde, *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée*, pp. 53, 54.

[2] Laborde, *Vue de deux Tombeaux détachés du Roc;* Letronne, in *Journ. des Savans*, 1835, Oct. p. 531.

city of the living; it is a stately mausoleum of the dead. Its only inhabitants are silence and desolation. Its well-known façades are not those erected in honour of the gods, as in India; nor do they lead to spacious royal catacombs, decorated not only without, but within, as in the long subterranean Egyptian tombs: they are simply carved on the outside, richly finished indeed, and massive, but merely leading to bare, dreary chambers within, in which the dead lay. There is wanting, too, that door in the rear of the tomb which is conspicuous in Egyptian sepulchres, and through which the shades of the departed were supposed to enter the lower world, and hold intercourse with their Judge.

Laborde made an eight days' stay at Petra, and then returned to Akaba by a route east of the Shera or Seir range. Leaving Petra, he passed southward a long mountain gorge bearing the name Wadi Sabra, in which were to be seen traces of ancient architecture, among which were conspicuous the ruins of a theatre. The relics of this wadi are inferior in interest to those of Petra, as well as to those in Wadi el Khusheibe, at the west, both of which seem to have been suburbs, as it were, of the larger central city. It is very probable that more thorough investigation into the intricate ravines of this mountain region would bring to light many other places once inhabited by the commercial Nabathæans. It was impossible for Petra, their flourishing capital, to have stood isolated in its splendour and power; and not only Wadi Sabra, but also the whole route which Laborde pursued to Akaba, displayed traces of having been once inhabited by a prosperous population. Everywhere there were walls built along the sides of mountains to sustain terraces of earth, heaps of stones which had been thrown out of the cultivated fields, cisterns, canals, and fortifications for the protection of commerce and agriculture, in both of which the Nabathæans were pre-eminent. The whole of this back road from Wadi Sabra, twenty-five leagues in length, extended through a complete *terra incognita*, following all the way on the east side of Jebel Shera, and traversing the high plain from which many transverse valleys run westward through the range, and enter the deep valley of the Araba. The road lay so high in the upper part of its course, as to afford a broad panoramic view of

Idumæa and the whole mountain district of Edom. Hor could be seen six hours' distance northward; the view west extended across the Araba to the Tih mountains, and eastward to the great Arabian chain. The farther the road ran southward, the more fertile became the soil, and the more abundant the vegetable growths. It was plain that it had once been in a state of considerable culture, and the very garden walls once erected by the Nabathæans could be traced. The way gradually led from the mountains to a high plain, which was very much more elevated than the level of Wadi Araba. The most important ruins passed were those of Ameime, which are of great extent. They are entirely devoid of elegance, however, and seem intended merely to answer commercial purposes. The place has sometimes been called the City of Cisterns, so great is the number of canals, wells, aqueducts, and reservoirs of every kind.

There is no special natural feature after that is passed, till the narrow Wadi Getune, or Ithm, begins its course, and serves as a way of transition from the high plateau to the coast at Akaba.

Burckhardt[1] intended to pass over this same route, but was prevented going farther south than Wadi Szadeke. Here he joined an Arab caravan, and journeyed westward to Suez. His brief journey southward[2] from Petra was not without profit, however; for he discovered the site of the ancient Maon, whose inhabitants are mentioned in connection with the Sidonians and the Amalekites as among the most prominent enemies of Israel (Judg. x. 12), under the name of Mehumims. They are mentioned as among the most formidable foes of king Uzziah. The position of Maan was always an important one, and it became still more so after pilgrimages began to be made from Damascus to Medina. Abulfeda mentions it as a small but prominent city in his day. Volney heard at Gaza of its importance for the provisioning of Mecca caravans. A very large part of the business of Gaza consisted, indeed, in sending goods to Maan for the use of pilgrims, and they were

[1] Burckhardt, *Trav.* p. 437.

[2] Burckhardt's *Plan of the Lower Portion of Wadi Musa;* Laborde, *Plan de la Ville de Petra et de ses Environs levé sur les lieux*, par L. d. Laborde, 1829; then consult the plan given by Robinson, and one in the *New York Observer* of Jan. 1841.

sold there at a considerable profit. The place itself lies at a spot where there is no agriculture carried on: all the wheat and barley used there must be brought from the fields of Jebel Shera. The people of the place are extremely poor, and their only regular occupation is the preparation of sheep-skins. The most of them can read and write, and are very devout students of the Koran. They are proud of their erudition, and many of them serve as writers or secretaries to the other Beduin sheikhs.

NOTE.—*Situation of Kadesh, according to Robinson, von Raumer, Ewald, and Rowland. The Southern Border of Palestine: Gerar, Harmah, Zephat, Bir-lahai-roi, Beit Hagar, Ain Kades, Adar, Azmon, Pharan.*

The grounds upon which the discussion of the situation of Kadesh rests are general in their character, and must be first determined by a balance of probabilities rather than by considerations which have found universal acceptance. One of the first things to be taken into account in settling the authenticity of any conjectural Kadesh, is its relation to Mount Hor and Edom, on whose western edge or border it is said to have lain. Robinson was strongly of the opinion that the springs of el-Weibeh correspond best with the conditions which define the location of Kadesh: it is the most important watering-place in the whole Araba valley, and is to the present day the chief rendezvous of caravans; and the disappearance of the old name and of all ruins did not unseat Robinson's confidence in the certainty of his conjecture. The absence of historical traces is, however, somewhat perplexing; for it is evident, from the allusion in Ps. xxix. 8, that Kadesh was a place of some note even in the time of David.

Yet it must be confessed, that a situation like this, abundantly supplied with water, on the edge of the Araba, and in the neighbourhood of a tributary wadi like el-Jeib, which is in itself a not unimportant watercourse, affords good reason for believing that it was possible at least for a large people to make a long halt here, since good supplies of water were necessary for a shepherd people having large flocks to care for. Yet the Scripture itself opposes this reasoning, and we are explicitly

told in Num. xx. 2, "And there was no water for the congregation." This could hardly be said of such a place as el-Weibeh, whose springs are so profuse and good, and which stands so closely in connection with Wadi el Jeib and Wadi Jerafeh.

On the other hand, the situation of this place is entitled to some consideration, in consequence of its nearness to the territory of Edom. Kadesh, we know, lay on the border of Edom—of course the western border. And unquestionably the nearest way from el-Weibeh to Moab led directly east and north-east through the mountains of Moab, it being the easy route running through Wadi Ghoyer. But this direct road was closed by the sword of the king of Edom, and the Israelites were compelled to take their long and toilsome way around the southern extremity of the range, and, turning the chain at Ezion-geber, to pursue their journey northward to Moab on the eastern side.

And north of el-Weibeh it is easy to see that there must have been the same difficulties to encounter in entering Judæa on the south which we know confronted the children of Israel, when the king of Arad discomfited them, and drove them back as far as Hormah (Num. xxi. 3), over the same road which the spies had taken as they entered the promised land.

Against this position of Kadesh at the Arab station of el-Weibeh, much, however, might be said; and some of the more eminent students of this subject, among them Ewald and von Raumer,[1] have not hesitated to assign it a more western location. Abraham dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and tarried for a time at Gerar, which renders it not probable that Kadesh lay so far south-east as el-Weibeh, at a point south of the Dead Sea. Hagar went into the wilderness by way of Beersheba; and the well of Hagar lay between Kadesh and Bered, on the road to Shur (Gen. xvi. 7, xxi. 14–21), that is, in the direction of Egypt, and not towards the east.

From the very earliest allusions to Kadesh, in connection with Abraham, at a time when the Horites inhabited the Seir mountains as far as to Pharan, and were conquered by Chedorlaomer, there is no detailed account of its location, nor indeed anything which would enable us to hazard a conjecture: we only know from Gen. xiv. 6, 7, that Chedorlaomer turned and

[1] K. von Raumer, *Palästina*, 2d ed. 1838, p. 206, and note to p. 222.

came to the springs of Mizpat (the ancient name of Kadesh), and subdued the whole territory of the Amalekites and Amorites: we know, moreover, from Deut. i. 19, that it lay at the foot of the mountains of the Amorites; and from Num. xxxiv. 3, 4, and Josh. xv. 3, that it was a southern frontier city of Canaan, and bordered on the desert of Zin; and from Josh. xv. 23, that it was reckoned as one of the cities of Judah.

A little more light respecting this question seems to be derivable from the northern course of the Israelites from Horeb. We read in Deut. i. 19, "And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-Barnea." This was the road which runs by Hazeroth (el-Hudhera), and which passes through the desert of Pharan: it is indicated in Num. x. 12, xiii. 4, 27. The next station to Hazeroth was Rithmah, and a Wadi Retemât is found even now south of Abdeh or Eboda. Robinson considers that its name is derived from the shrub or bush called retem, but Ewald[1] traces it back to the Israelitish station. The latter thinks that there is every reason to believe that the children of Israel passed onward over the most direct route to the southern border of Canaan; and with this coincides the words of Deut. i. 2, "There are eleven days' journey from Horeb, by the way of Mount Seir, unto Kadesh-Barnea." That in Num. xxxiii. 17, 18, Hazeroth and Rithmah follow each other so closely, seems to Ewald a thing of no importance. As all the other places seem to be entirely unimportant halting stations, so in the great wilderness there may have been others of the same character, which detained the Israelites for so short a time, that it has not been thought necessary to allude to them even by name. This direct route can be traced even now: it passes Wadi el Ain, Wadi el Atiyeh, Bir et Themed, and Ain Maliha, and emerges into the district adjoining the Roman station of Elusa, the modern Khulaseh. Ewald goes on to show that all the names of Israelitish stations subsequent to Rithmah are to be ascribed to the southern Canaanite territory. From all the circumstances, he remarks, it would appear that the Hebrews pushed their way for a considerable distance into southern Judah; and

[1] Ewald, *Gesch. des Volks Israels*, Pt. ii. p. 196.

in proof of this he cites Num. xiv. 45, "Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah." Driven back there, nothing remained to the Israelites but to retreat to the north-west boundary of Edom—a people not at war with them—and at Kadesh to take up their long abode.

As the name Kadesh itself signifies, and as can be gathered from the fragments of history, the place was sacred even anterior to the time of Moses: it seems indeed to have been a kind of oracle in the desert, to which the people of Egypt, Ammon, and Edom made pilgrimages, in order to know the decisions of the gods. The place was probably destroyed in David's time, after which it passed away from the knowledge of men; and only this remained known of it, that it was not to be looked for in the more southern desert of Pharan, but in that of Zin, and on the border of Edom. As it is generally known by the name of Kadesh-Barnea, it is probable that near the seat of the oracle was a city bearing the latter name, since in the Targums its place is supplied by Raquim, a name which Josephus, Abulfeda, and others confound with Petra.

Were the situation of the wilderness of Zin better known, and the western frontier of Edom more definitely fixed, the situation of Kadesh would be ascertained with much more certainty: yet both are to be looked for west of el-Weibeh, Robinson's conjectural Kadesh. Since the desert of Zin bounded the territory of Judah on the south-east, and is less extensive than that of Paran, its position and that of Kadesh may be determined with approximate certainty. Paran lay south, or more exactly, south-east of Zin; for we know that, since the spies went out from Zin to explore the land, it must have lain nearer to the object of their search than did Paran.

It was to Kadesh, the seat of the ancient oracle, that the ark of the covenant was brought. Here began a new capital, so to speak, firmly guarded against the encroachments of the roving Amalekites, and on terms not of hostility certainly with their neighbours the Edomites, who, like themselves, were the descendants of Abraham. Indeed, the Israelites, although not allowed to pass through the Edomite territory, may be said to have stood on terms of tolerable cordiality with them; for the Edomites were strictly neutral, and took no part with the

enemies of the Israelites. At Kadesh the latter appear to have remained for thirty-eight years, and from it they seem to have reached away in their encampments as far as they could find pasture for their flocks. Here it was that they suffered for water, and that the spring of Meribah Kadesh (Fountain of Strife) was opened in the rock for the relief of the people. The long sojourn at this spot, and their constant conflicts with their warlike neighbours, unquestionably were the means of thoroughly training in warlike discipline the new generation which was born in the wilderness, and which had before it the task of entering the promised land.[1]

If, then, Kadesh lay on the western border of Edom, it becomes an important question where the border ran.[2] Edom had dominion over the Seir mountains, including Hor and Petra: the range had been given to Edom as a possession; and as the Edomite domain, it was necessary for the Israelites to skirt it entirely, going southward as far as to the Red Sea (Deut. ii. 1–5, 8). Its position is therefore unmistakeable. But whether Seir is to be considered as a term confined to the territory east of the Akaba valley, from which the Horites, the primitive inhabitants, were first driven by the Edomites (Deut. ii. 12), or whether this name was applied, as Seetzen conjectured was the case, to the "great and dreadful" mountains west of the Araba, is a question. It would seem to be answered in the affirmative, if we should discover Kadesh farther west or north-west than el-Weibeh. It remains to be said, that, in the opinion of Ewald,[3] there is no ground whatever for the opinion advocated by some, that there were two places bearing the name of Kadesh.

I come now to speak of what seems to be the solution of the whole matter; namely, the discovery by Mr Rowland of a place called Kadese, five or six days' journey from Mount Hor.

[1] Ewald, whom Ritter is citing, would not, it would seem, be inclined to favour Stanley's eloquently pleaded conjecture, that Kadesh-Barnea is to be found in Petra itself.—ED.

[2] Stanley states in a note (*S. and P.* p. 94), that to represent Edom as extending west of the Araba is an anachronism, borrowed from the times after the captivity, when the Edomites, driven from their ancient seats, occupied the south of Judæa as far as Hebron.—ED.

[3] Ewald, *Gesch.* ii. pp. 206, 207.

In October 1842, Rev. G. Williams,[1] chaplain at Jerusalem, and Mr Rowland, joined company in an excursion south of Hebron, for the purpose of ascertaining more definitely than had been done up to that date, the facts regarding the true southern boundary of Palestine. During the first three days they pursued the same route, by way of Kirmel, Tell Arad, Bir el Malekh, to the springs of Arar (Aroer), which had been traversed with such unlooked-for results by Robinson four years before. After passing Arar they left the road which had been taken by Robinson, Schubert, and Lord Lindsay. Two and a half hours from Arar they left the plain, and ascended the first mountain chain which bounded it on the south. They then entered a high plateau known as Wadi Rakhmalr, and extending from east to west. Here began a broad tract of desert, which had been traversed by no European, and which bore the name *terra incognita* upon our maps.

They journeyed southward to a spring bearing the same name with that of the plain. Advancing still farther in the same direction, they reached a second ridge, from whose summit one of the most surprising of scenes greeted their sight. A gigantic range of mountains towered up with naked masses of rock, like Cyclopean bastions, in the savage desert, and the eastern and western extremities stretched away beyond the limits of sight. It extended far to the south too, and with its torn, ragged, chalky masses, it seemed like a place which had been overrun by fire, and presented not a trace of vegetation. This range seemed to Williams to be unquestionably the true southern barrier of Palestine; and that it was so, was confirmed by the sheikh who accompanied him, and who stated, moreover, that Kadesh lay some hours distant westward.

The gentlemen were not allowed by circumstances to follow this trail further at this time, but Mr Rowland[2] returned a short time afterward to prosecute the same line of research. Leaving Gaza, he followed the route to Khalasa, discovering at the end of the third hour the location of the ancient Gerar—its modern name Dshurf el Gerar. The Gerar Torrent he had already heard mentioned in Gaza. A deep, broad wadi comes in from

[1] G. Williams, *The Holy City*, London 1845, Part. i. and Appendix i. pp. 487, 488.

[2] John Rowland, letter in the same work, Appendix, pp. 488–492.

the south-east, where there were the ruins of an ancient city called Khirbet el Gerar.

From this spot Rowland went through the rolling country of Gerar in a south-south-easterly direction, coming at length to the important ruins of Khalasa, which he thought to be those of the ancient Chesil, one of the twenty-nine southern border cities of the tribe of Judah. It is spoken of in Josh. xv. 30, in direct connection with Hormah, Beersheba, and Kedesh.

Two hours and a half south-west of Khalasa he discovered fragments of broken pottery, and a few ruins to which the Arabs gave the name Sepata. This is the Arabic form of Zephath, a city spoken of in Judg. i. 17 as having been destroyed at a very early day. The place also bore the name of Hormah. The location on the western slope of the rocky mountain plain Rakhmah corresponds to the locality mentioned in Deut. i. 44, when this spot was reckoned as connected with the Seir territory: "And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah;" and although the name is not given of the elevated position which they inhabited, yet in the next allusion to the Israelites, two verses after, the name Kadesh comes out in a marked manner: "So ye abode in Kadesh many days."

The position of Kadesh in the neighbourhood of Chesil (Khalasa according to Rowland), and Hormah or Zephath (Sepata), would compel us to look for it, therefore, on the western slope of the lofty er-Rakhmah. A few hours east of Sepata the sheikh pointed out the site of an ancient town called Asluj or Kasluj, which when spoken bore some resemblance to Ziklag. Soon after they came to the ruins of Ruhaibeh, already spoken of, which the careful Robinson thought might *possibly* indicate the location of Rehobbth.

Ten hours south of this, Rowland discovered an important caravan rendezvous, the fountain of Moyle, or Moilahi. It lies between passes which form the transition from the mountains of the promised land to the great central desert known under the general name of the Tih Plateau. It is on the great road from Beersheba along the Jebel Shur to Egypt, and corresponds to the description of the Well of Hagar in the wilderness on the road to Shur (Gen. xvi. 7). This appeared to Rowland to

be unquestionably the "Bir-lahai-roi" which lies between Kadesh and Bered, and he subsequently found that the site of Kadesh is only five hours from it. Instead of Bir (fountain), the name Moi, Moile, *i.e.* water, has come into vogue here, as in so many other localities; and the Arabs call it Moilahhi Hajar. Though the latter word is the one always applied to a rock, yet the Arabs all assured Rowland that here it referred unquestionably to Hagar; they claimed, too, that in the wilderness was a structure still called Beit Hagar, the House of Hagar. The remarkable rock which bears that name lies three-quarters of an hour's distance from Moilahi, in a gorge between mountains. A square chamber of small dimensions is hollowed out of the precipitous rock; a single entrance leads to it, passing up a flight of stairs also hewn out of the solid rock. Behind this chamber are three smaller ones, connected directly with it, and possibly intended to serve as sleeping-rooms, but in no way bearing the appearance of graves. It is the tradition of the Arabs that Hagar dwelt in this place (Gen. xxi. 20, 21). Should this be a mere legend, yet it is interesting as one of the oldest in a country which has hardly been touched as yet by strangers.

Here the great desert spreads itself out, bounded on the west by Jebel Hallal and Yelek, on the east by the wilderness of Kadesh and Jebel el Khirm (Gen. xiv. 6), on the north by the southern hills of Judæa. This is the wilderness of Paran, or Pharan, in which Ishmael dwelt (Gen. xxi. 21), and which received within its inhospitable plains the children of Israel after they had come from Hazeroth and crossed the desolate et-Tih; or rather, in a more extensive sense, it is the desert of Paran, which reaches across the Tih plateau, and finds its southern beginning a short distance north of Sinai. Shur lies on the western side, towards Egypt, and extends to Suez. Kadesh lies at the north-east corner, near the Seir mountains, which even now, west of Ain Rakhmah, bear the name of Serr in the mouths of the Arabs.

The only thing which seemed to be lacking after these discoveries had been made, was to trace the site of Kadesh itself. This at last (if we may trust the evidence of Rowland) was effected, and the overjoyed travellers stood at the rock which Moses smote, where even now a brook and a charming waterfall testify to the miracle. The rock is an isolated mass, a colossal

projection from the mountain which towers far above it, the only one visible in the neighbourhood, bare and desolate. No sooner has the stream formed a bed for itself, than it turns to the west and is lost in the sand. Rowland says that he had never seen any sight so beautiful in the whole desert. The Beduins call the place Kudes and Ain Kades. The spring issues from the extreme north-eastern spur of Jebel Hallal, twelve miles E.S.E. of Moilahhi, and probably directly south of Khalasa. The English production of the name corresponds exactly with the Hebrew word Kadesh; the situation answers closely to the description of the southern territory of Judah given in Josh. xv. 1–8. From the region where Rowland discovered his conjectural Kadesh, he asserts that a direct route, traversing broad wadis, leads directly to Mount Hor, and thinks that there was no obstacle to prevent the children of Israel from falling back at once to that eminence.

[1] Robinson makes short work of Rowland's supposed discovery of Kadesh, in a note, ii. 194. He objects to it, that it is not in the uttermost part of Edom; that there is no great valley passing up thence through Edom to the eastern desert, like el-Ghuweir; that the host could not have proceeded thence directly to Mount Hor, where Aaron died; that there is no mountain near by which the spies could ascend into Palestine, nor by which the people could go up to Arad, where they were discomfited. Robinson thinks that the position of el-Ain is utterly inconsistent with all the circumstances narrated as having taken place at Kadesh. Other writers are nearly as doubtful about accepting the discovery as authentic. Stanley hints once or twice at its possibility, and Thomson is apparently inclined to think that the intemperate excitement of Mr Rowland over his imagined discovery is no passport in favour of its authenticity. Ritter incorporated this note into his volume after the work was nearly all printed, and it cannot be said to have undergone his thorough scrutiny. The discovery may at present be held to be doubtful.—ED.

CHAPTER X.

Sec. 15. PETRA, THE NABATHÆAN CAPITAL.

THE CITY OF TOMBS IN WADI MUSA—MOUNT HOR, WITH NEBI HARUN, OR THE GRAVE OF AARON.

BEFORE closing this account of the Sinai Peninsula, it is necessary to devote some pages to the discussion of the remarkable labyrinth of tombs in Wadi Musa, whose sculpture has retained so much of its ancient freshness, despite the Vandal rudeness to which it has been subjected during the last centuries. And yet our account must be gathered from the narratives of travellers who have been compelled in every instance to make hasty visits, and to feel constrained on every side if they attempted to enter into a thorough investigation of the place. It is true the city has been visited by men admirably skilled in the art of observing, and it is only to be wondered that, with the limited time at their disposal, they have succeeded so well as they have in depicting the place and its monuments; and yet up to the present time no plan has been drawn up of the city, no topographical survey made, and no detailed description given of the topography of the region: even those which have been given us contradict each other often, or are highly incomplete. Yet there is no lack of artistic material to illustrate the remarkable architecture of Petra. Of these, Laborde's classic work, the *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée*, is one of the most celebrated; yet it is in a manner vitiated by the sacrifice of truth to artistic effect. In all that relates to architecture and to the surrounding mountains, Mr Roberts' work[1] is to be called a masterpiece, uniting tone with beauty to a very high degree; nor are Bartlett's sketches[2]

[1] David Roberts, *Views in the Holy Land*, London, 1842–6.

[2] W. H. Bartlett, *The Christian in Palestine, or Scenes of Sacred History*; with explanatory descriptions by H. Stebbing. London.

devoid of elegance, or incapable of affording authentic information regarding the scenery of Petra.

And yet, while we must confess that, since Burckhardt's discovery of these ruins, very much has been done towards the work of exploring them and ascertaining their character, it must be acknowledged that much still remains to be done. But this cannot be attempted till the region in which Petra lies shall be brought under control, and the wild hordes which make it so dangerous to travellers shall be reduced to subjection. In view of the disturbed state of the region since the time of its discovery, our obligations to the travellers who have penetrated it cannot be too thankfully expressed.

Burckhardt[1] was only able to reach Petra clad in rags, and could make a stay of merely twenty-four hours there, exposed all that time to suspicion if he made any inquiries or manifested any curiosity. Laborde[2] remained eight days in Petra; but although able to make his sketches in that time, he was compelled to fly before he felt that he was prepared to go. Bankes, Irby, and Mangles[3] could spend but two days there; and just after they had found how much remained to be discovered, they were compelled to leave the spot. Lord Lindsay[4] could spend but a few hours at Petra, for fear of his life; von Schubert did not dare to pass twenty-four hours there, nor did Robinson venture to tarry longer than a day. Lord Prudhoe tarried but a night at Wadi Musa; Kinnear and Roberts spent several days there, but were repeatedly robbed, and compelled to fly sooner than they wished.

The fear of incurring the vengeance of Mohammed Ali was for a long time powerful in keeping the savage Arabs of this region in check; but an expedition of his being once sent against them, proved itself utterly unable to cope with them, and withdrew, leaving them masters of the ground. Each night the Arabs came out from their hiding-places and stole the arms and the valuables of the Egyptians, and withdrew before they could be discovered. Nor was it possible to follow them into their rock-bound retreats. The result was, that

[1] Burckhardt, *Travels*, p. 433.
[2] L. de Laborde, *Voy. de l'Arabie pétrée*, p. 60.
[3] Irby and Mangles, *Trav.* pp. 440 to 442.
[4] Lord Lindsay, *Letters*, pp. 30, 40 *et seq.*

the Arabs have become more emboldened than ever, and the difficulties in the way of examining Petra have been largely increased.[1]

The Entrance to Petra from the East by the Wadi es Syk.

Burckhardt, the discoverer of Petra, entered the city by the eastern route, the avenue which even to the present day is the most imposing feature of the place. Passing the source of the brook which watered the ancient capital, he followed the stream as it winds past the Arab village of Eljy, and soon after entered the Wadi es Syk. Not long after he passed three tombs on the right, and one on the left, which is ornamented with four slight pyramids or obelisks. These are mentioned by Robinson. Passing on through the ravine, he was surprised at discovering a fine arch, held by Letronne[2] to be the remains of a former gate to the city? This spanned the whole gorge, and greatly impressed Burckhardt with the elegance which it displayed in its construction, and the admirable manner in which it had been preserved. Robinson was able to examine it more at length, and has given us some details regarding it. The arch spans the entire gorge, and at each extremity is decorated with pillars, between which are niches in the wall, apparently for the reception of statues. It presents the appearance of a triumphal arch, according to both Robinson and Laborde,[3] and forms a truly imposing portal to the wonders of Petra. The width of the gorge is here but about twelve feet, and nowhere throughout the whole avenue is it more than three or four times that width. From the arch onwards there is a constant succession of inscriptions, tombs, niches, and traces of aqueducts, once intended, doubtless, to convey the waters of the brook. On both sides the walls rise to a great height, ranging from eighty to two hundred and fifty feet; yet, owing to the narrowness of the gorge, most travellers have overrated the altitude of the sides, one

[1] Of late the dangers and difficulties have so much increased, that within the last few years Stanley's party is almost the only one which has reached this celebrated place. The authorities which Ritter quotes remain (with Stanley's qualifications) the only authentic guides to this region.—ED.

[2] Letronne, in *Journ. des Savans*, i. p. 534.

[3] "Arc de Triomphe," Petra, in *Voy. de l'Arabie pétrée*.

writer having gone so far as to state that they are a thousand feet high. Through this gorge the brook flows, watering a thick growth of oleanders by the way, while wild figs and tamarisks spring from clefts in the walls, and ivy droops in graceful festoons from the cliffs. The winding cleft, which owes its origin apparently to volcanic action, has been widened in some places, and beautified everywhere by art, and has become one of the most romantic and one of the most remarkable rock galleries on the earth. Aloft the wild fig trees can be seen swayed to and fro by the wind, while below, in the deep shade, absolute silence reigns.[1]

As the brook which runs through this gorge was of the utmost importance to the welfare of the ancient inhabitants of this ancient Nabathæan capital, the greatest pains were taken to regulate and direct the supply of water. Its bed appears to have been entirely walled up, and even arched over for a part of the way, in order to make the approach to the city more stately, and at the same time more convenient for the crowds of caravans which streamed to Petra at the time of its power and pride. Stone walls are even now to be seen not only in the Sik avenue, but after the city has been reached, which once served to direct the course of the stream, and to break its force. Besides this, on both sides of the gorge, channels[2] seem to have been cut at a higher level than the true bed, to supply the place with water at all seasons, and to prevent the absorption of water during the summer season in the ground.

All the varied remains which decorate the place — the niches, the polished tablets, the excavations, the busts and mutilated statues, the traces of inscriptions—show what value the ancient Nabathæan capital placed upon the noble and unique avenue through which it is approached. It is no matter for wonder that the Beduins ascribe this all to the work of demons, and believe that the place is a secret repository of untold treasures.

After forty minutes' walk through the continually changing scenes of this wonderful yet beautiful chasm, for whose decoration, as Roberts the artist remarks, a whole race of sculptors must have been required, and after passing other fissures which

[1] J. Kinnear, *Cairo, Petra, etc.*, p. 139.

[2] Burckhardt, *Trav.* p. 423.

lead into it, which have not yet been explored, the gorge deepens still more than before, and bends sharply towards the north-west, at once opening upon a new and striking scene. At the angle, and confronting the grand approach, stands the gorgeous façade of the chief structure of Petra—the Khasneh, or Treasury.

All travellers agree that the first view of this structure is one of the most imposing that they have ever seen: it seems, appearing in this wild and savage desert, like the work of fairy hands alone: it is, moreover, perhaps the best preserved work that has come down to us from antiquity. Even the careful Robinson does not hesitate to speak as strongly as Lord Lindsay, and to declare that the first impression was more overpowering to him than all that he had seen in Rome, Athens, or Thebes; that in picturesqueness of situation, fineness and exactness in the use of the chisel, elegance and symmetry in the combination of the parts, and harmony in the whole, the structure is unique in its perfection, even if there be not perfect purity in the style in which it is executed. The beautiful rosy colour of the sandstone, when lighted up by the rays of the morning sun, all unite in asserting, contributes no little share towards the general effect;[1] and the situation, Bankes, a most competent judge, declares to be the finest conceivable. Burckhardt pronounces it to be a work of immense labour, being made not out of separate blocks of stone, but the whole structure, from the apex to the base, being hewn out of the solid sandstone rock of which it forms a part. Owing to the peculiar dryness of the climate, it has undergone the least possible injury from the weather, and stands almost as perfect as when it came from the hand of the artist. Laborde speaks of it as the most colossal relief existing, in which symmetry, art, and elegance are united in the most striking contrast with the surrounding wildness of nature. It stands as if in a colossal niche, surmounted so perfectly by the overhanging stone, as to protect it entirely from the action of storms.

[1] The reader will remember that Stanley carefully, yet delicately, tones down what the older travellers have written regarding the colours at Petra. He admits their gorgeousness, though he protests against their being supposed so conspicuous and glaring as they have been too often represented. It is possible that he may have gone with expectations too highly raised, the earlier visitors not enough so, and that both were equally surprised.—Ed.

Built in the form of a temple façade, and with a front resting upon four columns, all upon the largest and most admirable scale, the main interior apartment is a room merely sixteen paces square and twenty-five feet high, the whole being excavated out of the solid rock. All the walls are smooth, and destitute of ornament, not only in this main chamber, but in the three minor ones which lie at the sides and farther back, and which, as they are lighted only from the front, and have but a single entrance, appear to have been used as tombs. In the two side rooms which flank the main portal the same naked simplicity prevails. The main entrance passes beneath this portal, which is nobly ornamented on the exterior, by an ascent of five high steps; and the façade on each side of the pillars of the portico is profusely ornamented with figures, whose original meaning is in great part lost, as they have been injured probably by Moslems. Those which are higher up remain almost intact.

The four main pillars of the front, of which only one is broken, are each three feet in diameter, and rise to a height of thirty-five feet, terminating in fine Corinthian capitals. The entire front rises twice as high as the pillars, Burckhardt estimating it at sixty-five feet, while Robinson set it at a hundred, and Laborde at a hundred and twenty. Far above the lower storey there rises a second, with an unbroken architrave which rests upon pillars, above the top of which the gables approach; and the whole is crowned with a slender, round, temple-like tower, closing with a cupola and an immense stone urn. All the niches and the walls of the upper portion are filled with representations of female figures, two of which are winged, while the gable end is decorated with Roman eagles more or less mutilated. The urn which crowns the whole is the object of the Beduins' greatest greed, and it has been the mark of countless arrow-shots, the Arabs believing that in this urn Pharaoh concealed his treasures (hence the name Khazneh Faroun). It has not been broken, however, and every Arab discharges his shot at it, and turns away grumbling about the great giant Faroun, who has put his treasures beyond reach. To climb to that height would be a task which not even Beduins would dare attempt.

Travellers have perplexed themselves with the question

why this structure was built, and what purpose it subserved. Even the conjecture that it was a place of sepulture does not satisfy all minds; for it is in striking contrast with the catacombs of Egypt, whose interior, instead of being left naked and desolate, was most richly adorned. The theory has been advanced that it was a temple, and yet Bankes remarks that none of the figures carved upon it suggest that any divine attributes were ascribed to them. No conjecture has been made which seems tenable. Nor is the time when, it was constructed beyond doubt. Bankes drew the conclusion from the Roman eagles, and the general style of the architecture, that it dates from the epoch of Trajan, whose taste ran so strongly in this direction. Schubert thought that it was built even subsequently to that epoch, and concluded that it was left in an incomplete state. Roberts, whose judgment is very valuable, does not pronounce upon the date of the structure, but thinks that it was a comparatively small object to care for the interior; that the whole researches of the artist were called into requisition to give the exterior an imposing effect, and to this everything else is sacrificed. Roberts pays the strongest tribute to the purity of the style, the elegance and symmetry of the façade, and beauty of the colouring. Yet not even he is able to conjecture satisfactorily what purpose the whole was intended to serve.

A broad area before the Khazneh, fifty paces wide and three times as broad, ends at the south in a steep crag: northward, it opens out into a still broader fissure, which extends on for several hundred paces, with tombs on both sides. On the left the rock-amphitheatre comes suddenly into view, its seats and arena being in a perfect state of preservation. It is only after reaching that spot that there is a full prospect over the whole city, with its thousands of tombs. In many places they rise one above another from the bottom to the very top of the cliffs, and the highest and smallest ones look not unlike the houses of swallows and doves. They may be seen everywhere;[1] not only in the main fissure where the city

[1] Stanley says, however, that in the most populous part that he could select, he could number up in one view no more than fifty, and generally much fewer. Yet he admits that the aggregate number is very large.—Ed.

proper is, but in all the subordinate wadis or seams which enter the main one on every side. The Syk is but one out of many approaches, although the largest, the most profusely decorated, and the most imposing. They show, although but few of them have as yet been explored, that the population of Petra must have been very large.

Burckhardt noticed that the tombs on the way from the Khasneh to the amphitheatre, on both sides of the gorge, were generally high façades with a flat roof, but sometimes attaining a colossal size. They often have several small, and sometimes tolerably large, inner apartments, like the Khasneh; but in all cases, as there, these rooms are naked and devoid of all ornament. They could, he thinks, have served no other purpose than the reception of the dead. In one he counted twelve of these rooms, seemingly the possession of a numerous family. Many of the more simple tombs present the appearance of truncated pyramids, with two pilasters at the side, and with the entrance in the middle, reminding one of the Palmyra tombs; yet differing from them in this respect, that at Petra they are cut from the primitive rock, while at Palmyra they are made of separate stones. This is due to the nature of the place, and finds its parallel in the sandstone structures of Egypt, some of the marble ones of Greece, as well as some in India, which are hewn out of a single rock. Where the cliffs are high enough to permit it, these tombs rise one above another, as I have already remarked. The openings to them are generally filled with sand and rubbish, and very few have as yet been examined. The variety in the forms of the tombs is very great, owing to the fact that it has been necessary to adapt them to the peculiarities of the different parts of the rock where they have been excavated; indeed, it has been said that no two can be found which are precisely alike. It is impossible, therefore, to speak of a common architectural style, although the whole can be summed up as one great Necropolis.

The theatre, wholly hewn out of rock,[1] has thirty-three rows of benches, each one of which is capable of accommodating a hundred persons. This makes the entire capacity to have been about three thousand sittings. It does not differ from other works of the same class, excepting in this, that above the upper-

[1] Von Schubert, ii. p. 428.

most rows of seats, and in the cliffs on both sides, there are the same tombs which fill the remainder of the valley. The place built for mirth is brought into the closest proximity with the high places of death, and thoughts of sport alternated with those of eternity. The eye of the spectator wandered from the scene where pleasure presided, to those which testified of grief; and never has there been known a place where such a contrast as this has been displayed, for even Paris places the burial-places of her dead without her walls, and other places have made them the companions of churches. The decoration of these tombs, as well as of the others, indicates the prominent part which vanity played at Petra, as well as at other places. It is impossible to assign any authentic date to the construction of the theatre. It may be a monument of the time of Hadrian, or, as some think, still more recent; but whenever it was constructed, it is a work which contrasts strongly in respect of size with the titanic vastness of the objects around it. So grand is the scale of all the objects around, so peculiar the architecture, and so rich the colours displayed on every hand, that the theatre sinks into insignificance. In the diversity of architectural forms which are found, there are the representatives of all ages, and artists of all tendencies appear to have free scope to work out their various fancies. Here are found traces of the ancient architecture of the place which is referred to by Jeremiah (xlix. 16): "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thy heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation;" and by Obadiah (3 and 4): "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" and from that time down to the epoch when the commerce of the Nabathæans with Babylon, Tadmor, Egypt, and the shores of the Mediterranean, introduced the Egyptian pyramidal and the Syrian styles, as well as those of Greece and of Rome. Tasteless though grandiose tombs are to be seen there, which owe their origin to the epoch between Hadrian and Antoninus; and even the rise of Christianity finds its witness there, some of the

ancient halls having evidently been transformed into churches. All these things bear witness to the influence of many different nations upon this rich and commercial Nabathæan people, which reached out its arms to the ends of the earth.

The broad space which comes into view when one has advanced as far as the amphitheatre, is not a true valley as Pliny termed it, nor a plain as Strabo asserted, but a deep rolling tract shut in by the crags, and with two prominent knolls or hills occupying the central part. These hills were once covered with edifices, as the immense masses of rubbish, and hewn stones of every size and form, still show. Here was unquestionably the *city of the living*, surrounded on every side by the city of the dead.

The brook continues its north-westerly course through this rolling tract, and between these hills, here and there disappearing beneath the rubbish, and then appearing anon. For a considerable part of the way, this brook appears to have been arched over as at Philadelphia and other cities. Robinson discovered several remains of bridges which once passed over it, and traces of paved paths or roads which once ran along its side. In the low grounds upon the left bank of this stream, ruins are still to be seen, which appear to have once belonged to the most important building in Petra. These ruins are sufficient to show that the opulence of this old Nabathæan capital did not consist solely in magnificently decorating the abodes of its dead. Laborde has given among his thirty beautiful views of the architectural remains of Petra, four of those which are found in this spot, two of which he conceived to have been a temple, and two others a triumphal arch. Their exact purpose is not known with certainty; yet the richness of their decorations, although belonging to a late and sunken period of art, reminds one of the splendid structures of Palmyra and Baalbec. Their pillars, portals, triglyphs, friezes, and festoons of flowers, are like those wrought in the Syrian Decapolis in the third and fourth centuries. The temple, called by the Beduins Serai Farouns, is the only structure still standing which is at all complete, and which stands without any support from the crags around. Burckhardt heard this place called the Kaszr Bent Faroun, or the Palace of Pharaoh's Daughter. He was very anxious to visit it, but the suspicions of his guides were aroused, that his

object was to secure buried treasure, and he was unable to enter it. He discovered, however, on the same side of the brook, which he says pursues a subterranean course here of a quarter of an hour's distance, a solitary pillar thirty feet in height, and composed of a dozen pieces of stone. It was called Zob Faroun (*hasta virilis Pharaonis*). Laborde has given a view of it. According to Robinson, it forms a part of a temple, whose broken columns and fragments strew the earth around.

The main ruins, which lie on the left bank of the brook, have been largely washed away and undermined by the brook at its times of flood; and the water may be seen here and there standing in pools, which are in some cases surrounded by masses of rubbish towering high up the sides of the cliffs. These have not yet been examined and described with any minuteness. On the right side of the brook there is another mass of ruins, but the original forms, of which they once formed a part, are more indistinguishable than those on the eastern side. It is still manifest, however, that it was on this side that the main body of the city lay, and that, extending a good way northward as it did, its area could scarcely have been less than an hour's circuit. On the east side of the brook the tombs still continue, cut out of the sides of the crags; in one place Burckhardt counted fifty of these ranged side by side. He remarks, moreover, that the finest sepulchres in Wadi Musa are in the eastern cliff, and that high up he noticed one large tomb with Corinthian pilasters. Laborde has given views of some of the most remarkable sepulchres on this side; and Irby and Mangles have described some of them in considerable detail. One of these, perhaps the largest, is three storeys in height, the lower one of which is entered by four portals. The two upper storeys are ornamented with eighteen Ionic pillars each, while a part of the structure, which once evidently towered above the crag, was made of hewn stones, but had fallen into ruin. In the interior they discovered apartments furnished with marble, and bearing the traces of luxury. Another mausoleum, seventy or eighty feet in height, and of great extent, having a central part and two wings, the whole hewn out of the rock, and provided even with cellars, is remarkable not only for the number and size of its apartments, but also from the fact that it bears traces of having been

transferred from its original purpose into a Christian church, the only monument of its kind in the entire city. In three niches yet to be seen are remains of altars; the places where tapestry and pictures were suspended are to be seen on the walls; and in one corner is an inscription executed in red, giving the date when the place was consecrated. Unfortunately the latter is one of the interesting facts which Mr Bankes' refusal to publish the results of his explorations withholds from the world.

The western wall of the wadi is higher than the eastern, attaining an altitude of three or four hundred feet; and from the bottom to the top it is perforated with tombs, although they are not so elaborately constructed or so numerous as in the eastern cliff. This part was therefore considered by Irby and Mangles as a kind of suburb of the place. On this side lies the unfinished tomb copied by Laborde, in which it is perfectly easy to see that the method of working pursued by the Nabathæan architects was to smooth the face of the rock, and then to commence at the top and to work downward, first executing the roof, then the frieze, then the capitals of the pillars, then the pillars themselves, and so on till the whole work was finished. This explains the circumstance, that so many tombs which are elaborately wrought in the upper part, have been left in a rude state below; for the scale laid out may have been necessarily abandoned, in consequence of the failure of the means which had been reckoned upon at the outset. This too solves a mystery which perplexed Mr Bankes, namely, that in some cases the façade is wrought in one architectural style in the upper storey, while the lower one is in another. Laborde noticed the same fact, and was perplexed by it. But the union not only of the various Greek orders of architecture in the same structure, but of others, even of the Egyptian and other oriental styles, shows that in those instances the time of building was not confined to a few years, but was distributed over many; and that the thread which was dropped by the older architects was taken up by the subsequent ones, until the whole work was completed. Sometimes, too, there is great irregularity in the exterior appearance of the structure; and where this is the case, and pillars and doors have been set in such fanciful positions as to mar the architectural effect, it has been found

owing to some necessity growing from the configuration of the apartments within.

Most of these structures in the rock walls which surround Petra were unquestionably intended to serve as tombs, but Bankes satisfied himself that there were exceptions to this. In one he discovered four front windows, and a hall sixty feet long, and of proportionate breadth and height, which had evidently been built to serve as a dwelling. It differed from the tombs, however, in the entire absence of ornament in the exterior. Nor was this the only instance of the kind. The entrance to this house was not from the level ground, but from a projecting ledge of rock; recalling the words of Isa. xxii. 16, "What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that *graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?*" It remains up to the present day a mystery how the people who inhabited those lofty abodes were able to reach them; and Schubert in his perplexity asks, Did the builders of those places have wings like the eagle, to enable them to soar to those lofty heights?

Robinson, who followed the course of the brook down to this point, says that the water was not abundant, but excellent. It flows westward from this spot, entering a gorge which resembles in general character the Syk, but which is broader and more irregular in shape than that. The brook is so thickly shaded with oleanders, that it is difficult to follow its course. The walls of this gorge are also full of tombs, but they are smaller than the others, and destitute of external decorations. A high rock on the left Laborde held to be the Acropolis of Petra, though Robinson doubts it: Irby and Mangles make no allusion to it. Formy, who visited Petra in 1840, is the only traveller who has made any detailed allusions to it; and his narrative is so confused and inexact, as to be of much less value than could be wished. He has, however, brought some interesting facts to light. He alludes to a tomb there as being the only one which he saw whose interior is ornamented. Laborde speaks of it as now used mainly by the herdsmen as a sheepfold. From this spot Formy climbed to an adjacent elevation, on which he found a cistern constructed with excellent cement, and a little way higher two bastions with walls in a state of ruin: what

purpose they had served, remained a mystery to him. South of this species of fort he came to a platform hewn out of the rock, sustaining two stone obelisks, bearing the name Zob Faroun, which seemed to be applied with a different meaning than to the pillar of which Burckhardt speaks under the same name. Every step which he took from that spot to his tent, revealed to him new winding stairs and paths in the rock, with traces here and there of gardens which he thinks must at one time have imparted a paradisaical air to the place.

Robinson sought to find an opening in the narrow gorge running westward which would lead him to the ruin called the Deir. He found many narrow wadis, but they did not guide him to the object of his search; and the shepherds assured him that it is inaccessible from this point. Farther west the gorge has never been penetrated, and not even the Arab guides could tell in what direction the waters of the brook force their way through the mountains. Yet Robinson satisfied himself that Wadi Musa does not run under this name into the great Araba, and that the course which Laborde has given on his map has no real existence. Irby and Mangles followed the course of the brook but for a little distance, but long enough to be filled with surprise at the profuse luxuriance of the oleander thickets which follow its course, as well as at the other growths which accompany it. They discovered carobs, figs, mulberries, grapes, pomegranates, and a beautiful variety of aloe. In this neighbourhood, too, there was no lack of sculptured recesses in the rock walls, although they were often low and irregular. The skill displayed here was far inferior to that seen in other parts of Petra.

Above the rubbish heaps of the ruined city, and above the colossal walls which hem it in, rises the lofty double peak of Hor, towering up in solitude, a jagged, massive, and naked mass of rock. It was Burckhardt's wish to ascend to the summit; but this he was unable to accomplish, and only succeeded in reaching a platform from which the traditional tomb of Aaron can be seen. Here his Arab companions offered a sheep, in sacrifice to the great high priest. They soon withdrew again to the valley below, with the more satisfaction to Burckhardt, as he heard from the Arabs that the tomb above contained nothing whatever which would repay him for the toil of ascend-

ing the mountain farther. He afterwards regretted not making the effort, as he heard that within the tomb are three interesting copper vessels which were once in use in sacrificing. No subsequent traveller has confirmed the existence of these copper vessels, and it seems probable that Burckhardt was incorrectly informed.

The first Europeans who reached the summit, and visited the so-called tomb of Aaron, were Bankes, and his companions Irby and Mangles.[1] They describe the ascent as very difficult, although there were many places where the path had been smoothed away, apparently for the accommodation of the great numbers of pilgrims who ascended it. The time required to reach the top was an hour. The rocks were not entirely destitute of verdure; and even at the summit the travellers found some shrubs which were new to them, particularly some thorny ones, and an unknown kind of juniper.

The building which bears the name of Aaron's tomb does not differ at all from the ordinary structures which cover the remains of the Arab sheikhs and holy men. It is apparently composed, in part at least, of fragments of stone, which had been used in a previous structure on the same spot. At present the only noticeable objects in the building are some rags, bits of yarn, false pearls, and para coins, all of the least possible value. Some steps below the chapel there is an arched vault, in whose rear there is a couple of chains, which guard the entrance to what purports to be the real burial-place of the saint: the door is also guarded with a ragged cloth. The dim light of the lamp did not allow many objects to be seen; and as the travellers were obliged to enter the place barefoot, on account of its reputed sanctity, they did not remain within it long, but soon withdrew, for fear of snakes or scorpions.

The view in all directions from the summit of Mount Hor is very extensive, although very few of the details which make it up are known by name, and the distance is too great to distinguish many of the objects in the range of vision. Still we cannot wholly pass over a prospect so interesting. From the southern shores of the Dead Sea a chain of mountains may be seen, extending far away into the south, but diminishing in height, until in the distant horizon they seem to be unimportant

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 433–439; Legh, pp. 230–232.

hills. Legh insists that from the summit of Hor he distinctly discerned Mount Sinai. At the foot, the long sandy plain of the Araba can be traced, its surface seamed with the courses of wadis and brooks, and as it nears the immediate base, displaying scattered hills, which in their isolation have the appearance of islands. Towards the south-west the sight wanders away indefinitely, without falling upon any prominent object. Towards the south-east the vision is bounded by the near Arabian chain, and from that the eye comes back to Hor itself, with its steep jagged sides, its gorges and precipices, and its labyrinthine valleys. The most striking single object to be discerned from the summit, is the colossal structure known as ed-Deir, or the Convent. It is in a north-easterly direction from the tomb of Aaron, and even there is seen to be larger than the Khasneh, although of similar style; and, like that, it is crowned with a colossal urn. Petra is entirely concealed from view, as one stands on the summit of Hor.

Laborde[1] is the first European traveller who has succeeded in reaching the Deir. The way is an intricate one, and cannot be found without a guide. The ascent from the valley is rapid and steep, and the brooks fall in pleasant little cascades, as they find their way down to the bottom. Later travellers estimate the entire altitude of the "Convent" as about a thousand feet above Wadi Musa. The building, although colossal in proportions, is executed in the debased style of the third and fourth centuries, and recalls to one's mind the decline of the *renaissance* style of the fifteenth. The general appearance is similar to the Khazneh, there being two storeys, with colonnades and pilasters, ten below and six above. There is less detail in the finish, and all is more coarsely executed,—a deficiency which was explained away by subsequent travellers, however, who showed the structure had never been brought to a state of completion.

Robinson subsequently visited ed-Deir, and has left a good account of it, and of its general situation. From the steps, Mount Hor can be seen at the south-west, throned in solitary majesty, while the eye runs far away over the savage sandstone crags, and down the steep defile which forms the ascent.

[1] Laborde, *Voy.* p. 59, and *Plan de la ville de Petra et de ses environs, levé sur les lieux*, p. L. de Laborde; Irby and Mangles, *Sketch of the ground-plan of Petra*, in *Trav.* p. 419.

The building itself, despite its overladen style, makes a very strong impression upon the mind. That it is now only a part of what it once was, is shown by the stairways which are seen in the neighbourhood, the tombs near by, and the ruins of a palace just confronting it. The latter was not visited till Roberts and Kinnear explored the place thoroughly. The interior of ed-Deir, like that of the Khazneh, does not correspond to its exterior richness: Robinson saw nothing but a bare room hewn out of the rock, and in the rear a recess slightly elevated, and approached by flights of steps at the ends,—an arrangement which reminded him of the altars in many Greek churches. He thought he also saw traces indicating that a curtain had once hung there; and the impression was strongly made on his mind, that the place was originally erected as a heathen temple, but had been converted into a Christian church. Roberts, the distinguished artist, who subsequently visited the place and sketched it, was made more certain, if possible, than Robinson had been: he discovered a cross painted on the wall in the rear of the altar. The dimensions of the main apartment are fifty feet by fifty, and thirty high. The elevation of the urn is thought by the latest travellers to be a hundred feet higher than that of el-Khazneh. Roberts was the first to discover that the rudeness of the architecture, which had been spoken of by Laborde and Robinson, results from the fact that the work was never completed. It is a work so modern in its date, that many of the capitals of the columns and other architectural details have never been begun.

Regarding its name ed-Deir, we have no definite information. The allusions in Fulcher of Chartres throw no definite light upon it; and our knowledge of Petra as the seat of a bishopric, is not sufficiently extensive to allow our coming to any exact conclusion regarding it.

The ruined temple directly opposite ed-Deir appears to be of more ancient origin than ed-Deir itself. It was visited, as I have remarked, by Roberts, who took his view of the "Convent" thence. It lies a little higher than the other; and at the present time the pavement of its portico and the basis of the side columns can be traced: the *adytum* can also be distinguished, cut as it is in the solid rock. Roberts speaks of the view from that point as sublime in the highest degree; and as

his eye wandered away from the mysterious architectural forms around him to the mountains of Edom, which confronted him, he was often compelled to lay down his pencil in despair, at the thought of putting upon paper what was so grand and inspiring.

Schubert's genial account[1] adds little to what has already been said. He was interested, however, as he stood on Mount Hor, and looked away towards the south-east, at seeing the districts of Teman, Shuah, and Naama, whence the three friends of Job came to Uz to comfort him, as well as Buz, the later Bostra, and the home of Elihu. North-eastward his vision reached away to the home of Job himself. Schubert estimated the summit of Hor to be 1400 feet above Petra, and 3400 feet above the level of the sea.

Those interested in what pertains to the history of Petra, will find it summed up in the pages of Robinson, to which I will content myself with referring the reader.

[1] Schubert, *Reise*, ii. p. 435.

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